the weekly Standard

FEBRUARY 26, 2006 $3.95

DINESH AND THE WOLFE
PETER BERKOWITZ

'Civilization' and Its Contents

VICTORINO MATUS on a video game for the ages

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This barber knows his cutting-edge automotive technology

I'm Henry Besanceney, the only barber in Honeoye Falls, a small town in upstate New York. When you have GM's top scientists in your chair like I do, you get to know a lot about the newest cutting edge technologies. A whole lot. I've learned they're engineering the first drivable hydrogen fuel cell by-wire powertrains. It's an innovation that will outperform today's engines on cost, power and durability. The only thing missing is the pollutants. That's because the only emission the fuel cells produce is pure, clean water vapor. Now that's refreshing!

They say GM is also employing other renewable fuel technologies in their vehicles, like E-85 ethanol made from corn. You'd have to talk to a barber in Nebraska about that one.

Henry A. Besanceney

Henry Besanceney

GM

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Cutting-Edge Commentary on K–12 Education

EDUCATION NEXT

A JOURNAL OF OPINION AND RESEARCH

SUBSCRIBE

Receive four quarterly issues for $20.

FREE ISSUE

Receive a complimentary issue of the latest Education Next without obligation.

Call 800.935.2882 or visit www.educationnext.org

In the new issue of *Education Next*

Debunking a Special Education Myth

Can spiraling special education costs explain why educational achievement has remained stagnant over the past three decades, while real education spending has more than doubled? Policy makers, education researchers, and school district officials often make the claim that private placements for special needs children drain resources away from regular education students. As it turns out, however, the evidence contradicts the private placement myth. Only a very small fraction, 0.18 percent, of disabled students are placed in private schools at public expense. And contrary to claims that this is increasingly common, the likelihood that disabled students will be placed in a private school has not grown in the last 15 years.

—Jay P. Greene and Marcus A. Winters

Catholic Schools Face Challenging Times

Despite a growing Catholic population (from 45 million in 1965 to almost 77 million today, making it the largest Christian denomination in the United States), Catholic school enrollment has plummeted from 5.2 million students in nearly 13,000 schools in 1960 to 2.5 million in 9,000 schools in 1990. Catholics make up about one-quarter of the American population, but their schools enroll less than 5 percent of all students. What happened to the Catholics? What happened to a school system that at one time educated one of every eight American children? And did it quite well.

—Peter Meyer

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

To read more, call 800.935.2882 for a free copy of the latest *Education Next*.

HOOVER INSTITUTION

. . . ideas defining a free society

Hoover Institution Stanford University Stanford, CA 94305-6010 Tel: 877.466.8374 Fax: 650.723.1687 info@hoover.stanford.edu www.hoover.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE CLEAN LITTLE SECRET

More steel is recycled each year than all other materials combined. But that's just part of steel's environmental story.

Three-fourths of all American steel ends up recycled into new products, part of the steel industry's comprehensive environmental commitment. Over the past decade, American steelmakers have reduced the energy required to produce one ton of steel by 28 percent – and we've already reduced emissions to levels well below Kyoto standards. Innovation and technology have transformed America's steel industry into one of the world's most competitive, sustainable and environmentally progressive.

The New Steel Feel the Strength.

For more information, visit www.steel.org

A message from the American Iron and Steel Institute (AISI)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Contents

Febraury 26, 2007 • Volume 12, Number 23

2 Scrapbook ..... Contentions, Parade, *and more.*

4 Casual ..... *Joseph Epstein, addressee.*

5 Correspondence ..... *On Duke, campus health, etc.*

7 Editorial ..... *The Democrats' 'Slow-Bleed Strategy'*

Articles

8 Excommunication for Thee *Alan Wolfe's self-incriminating attack on Dinesh D'Souza.* ..... BY PETER BERKOWITZ

10 Europe's Iran Problem *Problem? What problem?.* ..... BY DANIEL JOHNSON

11 To Be Continued *The Democratic Congress's inadvertent budget reform.* ..... BY YUVAL LEVIN & JAMES C. CAPRETTA

13 But Will People Listen? *Bush goes after the Democrats.* ..... BY FRED BARNES

15 What's in a Name? *Ask Taiwan.* ..... BY GARY SCHMITT & JOHN TKACIK

16 Ramping Up the Violence *The truth about the Temple Mount controversy.* ..... BY DAVID GELERNTER

Cover: Image courtesy of Firaxis

Features

19 'Civilization' and Its Contents
A video game for the ages. ..... BY VICTORINO MATUS

27 George Polk's Real War Record
The fictional career of a famous newsman. ..... BY RICHARD B. FRANK

30 A Battle Royal
France girds for the Sarko-Ségo showdown. ..... BY MICHEL GURFINKIEL

Books & Arts

33 Bach to the Future *Why Johann Sebastian appeals to moderns.* ..... BY GEORGE B. STAUFFER

36 Unthinkable Thoughts *A strategist asks, Where is technology leading us?.* ..... BY ERIC COHEN

37 Ike's Second Army *Whatever happened to the Eisenhower Republicans?.* ..... BY STEPHEN HESS

39 Have Book, Will Travel *The author is sold, along with the text.* ..... BY THOMAS SWICK

42 Warhol's Inferno *'The most neoconservative movie ever made.'* ..... BY JOHN PODHORETZ

44 Parody ..... *Turkmenistan's toothsome new president.*

William Kristol, *Editor* **Fred Barnes,** *Executive Editor*
Richard Starr, *Deputy Editor* **Claudia Anderson,** *Managing Editor*
Christopher Caldwell, Andrew Ferguson, David Tell *Senior Editors* **Philip Terzian,** *Literary Editor*
Stephen F. Hayes, Matt Labash, *Senior Writers* **Victorino Matus, David Skinner,** *Assistant Managing Editors*
Matthew Continetti, *Associate Editor* **Jonathan V. Last,** *Online Editor*
Sonny Bunch, *Assistant Editor* **Duncan Currie,** *Reporter* **Michael Goldfarb,** *Deputy Online Editor*
Whitney Blake, Joseph Lindsley, *Editorial Assistants*
Lev Nisnevitch, *Art Director* **Philip Chalk,** *Production Director*
Paul Weisner, *Finance Director* **Catherine Lowe,** *Marketing Director*
Taybor Cook, *Office Manager* **Carolyn Wimmer,** *Executive Assistant* **Abigail Lavin,** *Staff Assistant*
Gerard Baker, Max Boot, Joseph Bottum, Tucker Carlson, John J. DiIulio Jr., Noemie Emery, Joseph Epstein, David Frum, David Gelernter, Reuel Marc Gerecht, Brit Hume, Frederick W. Kagan, Robert Kagan, Charles Krauthammer, Tod Lindberg, P. J. O'Rourke, John Podhoretz, Irwin M. Stelzer, *Contributing Editors*
Terry Eastland, *Publisher*

the weekly Standard

The Weekly Standard (ISSN 1083-3013), a division of News America Incorporated, is published weekly (except the first week in January, third week in April, second week in July, and fourth week in August) at 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington D.C. 20036. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 50108, Boulder, CO 80322-0108. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-283-2014. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders and changes of address to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 50108, Boulder, CO 80322-0108. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-902-563-4723 for subscription inquiries. American Express, Visa/MasterCard payments accepted. Cover price, $3.95. Back issues, $3.95 (includes postage and handling). Send letters to the editor to The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617. For a copy of The Weekly Standard Privacy Policy, visit www.weeklystandard.com or write to Customer Service, The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington, D.C. 20036. Copyright 2007, News America Incorporated. All rights reserved. No material in The Weekly Standard may be reprinted without permission of the copyright owner. The Weekly Standard is a registered trademark of News America Incorporated.

BPA INTERNATIONAL

www.weeklystandard.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Contentious Bunch

Coincidentally, three of the contributors to this issue—David Gelernter, Daniel Johnson, and Yuval Levin—are also among the collaborators in a terrific new group blog, *Contentions*, which is sponsored by *Commentary* magazine and can be read at *commentarymagazine.com/contentions.*

The Scrapbook is old enough to remember with fondness and more than a little nostalgia the original *Contentions*, a monthly publication of Midge Decter's Committee for the Free World, which like that fine organization closed its doors with its mission accomplished—the collapse of the Soviet Union.

In the valedictory December 1990 issue of *Contentions*, Midge noted that among the important work carried out by her committee was to oppose "the anti-Americanism of the fashionable liberal and leftist intelligentsia," which "represented a very real danger to the country, for inevitably over time it was bound to produce a terrible demoralization. Even the citizens of a sturdy democracy cannot resist forever the erosions of a culture that continually disconfirms their beliefs, their principles, their very daily lives. A demoralized society cannot mount a defense of itself, in the end not even in that bedrock definition of defense as the military means necessary to hold off an enemy bent on your destruction."

Alas, there is an all-too-contemporary sound to those words, without the good cheer that accompanied them in 1990. Happily, there is a new *Contentions* to pick up where the original left off. The Scrapbook extends a welcoming tip of its homburg to the full roster of contributors. Besides those mentioned above, they are: Davi Bernstein, Max Boot, Daniel Casse, Hillel Halkin, Victor Davis Hanson, Michael J. Lewis, Sam Munson, Joshua Muravchik, Emanuele Ottolenghi, Gary Rosen, Lisa Schiffren, Gabriel Schoenfeld, Kevin Shapiro, Terry Teachout, and Ruth R. Wisse. Some of these names will no doubt be familiar to Weekly Standard readers; all of them should be. ♦

Mandatory Procreation?

A friend and sometime contributor, the distinguished law professor David Wagner, has given Washington State's proposed ballot Initiative 957 the welcome it deserves (a Bronx cheer) at his blog *ninomania.blogspot.com* (David is a Scalia fan). Here's the abridged version:

"A splinter of the same-sex marriage movement is trying to score some quickie debating points by pretending to agitate for a law in Washington State that would require married couples to have a child within three years of marriage, and criminalize divorce for married couples with children.

"The idea, of course, is to caricature some of the (already misunderstood) arguments of gay marriage opponents, and to develop that caricature into a political stunt to convince voters that a law like this is the inevitable consequence of rejecting gay marriage.

"Those who have followed this debate know that same-sex marriage opponents have always rejected the view—attributed to them as something they 'must' believe—that infertile opposite-sex couples cannot validly marry. As for criminalizing divorce: Proponents [of same-sex marriage] are right that opponents should, in all justice, devote some of their energy to curbing divorce. I in fact have done so, arguing in a paper for the Family Research Council that no-fault divorce is an experiment gone awry. But no serious critic of divorce (or even any un-serious one) has ever argued for criminalization.

"What's more, they are right not to, for at least two reasons: (1) criminalization, in general, is a seriously overused move in American policy-making, across a wide range of issues; and (2) criminalization of divorce is simply not our legal tradition. Divorce critics may indeed want to return to a status quo ante, but that status quo ante is not a regime of criminalized divorce: It's a regime of divorce based on fault.

"Would Initiative 957 even be constitutional? Its proponents are claiming to base it on a line in the Washington State Supreme Court's decision of last summer, upholding the state's marriage law, to the effect that procreation is a 'legitimate state interest.' But, as these legal activists surely know, a 'legitimate state interest' is, by definition, entirely subordinated to constitutional rights. Simply put, a state power to annul an existing marriage against the wishes of the parties would be a novel and unprecedented power-claim. The Washington State Supreme Court's decision last summer allowed the state to decline to recognize a new and revolutionary form of marriage. That is universes away from allowing the state a new and revolutionary power to destroy existing marriages.

"The ideologically opposite analogy for Initiative 957 would be something like this: a socially conservative group forms a committee with a name like 'Citizens for Marriage Equality,' and proposes a law annulling the parental rights of parents who refuse to raise their children in a 'gay-affirming culture.' Nobody would support that. Such an 'initiative' would be a menda-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cious piece of political theater—just like 'Initiative 957.'"

When THE SCRAPBOOK starts a blog, it will be called *Wagnermania*. ♦

Crises We're Not Losing Sleep Over

Breaking real estate news from the *Wall Street Journal Online*, February 12 edition, "Empty Nests: Choice Apartments in Manhattan Sit Unoccupied": "Wealthy jet-setters have long maintained cozy Manhattan pieds-à-terre, but the city's choicest properties are increasingly being scooped up by out-of-towners. More than 10% of Manhattan apartment sales are second-home purchases, up from about 5% eight years ago, estimates Jonathan Miller of Miller Samuel, one of Manhattan's largest real-estate appraisal firms.

"Donald Trump says that more than half the condo owners at his buildings on Central Park West and Park Avenue are part-timers. These people 'may not even know the address' of their New York holdings, says Mr. Trump, but 'they'd still rather own a place in New York than schlep to a hotel.' . . .

"The rise in absentee owners worries some Manhattan residents and urban-affairs experts, who say too many out-of-towners can sap the vitality out of buildings. 'It deadens the whole neighborhood,' says society decorator Keith Irvine, a long-time Upper East Side resident. 'You sometimes get a sense that whole streets are deserted.'

"Antonio 'L.A.' Reid, chairman of Universal Music Group's Island Def Jam label, calls 515 Park Ave. a 'wonderful place' for him and his family. Mr. Reid owns three homes, but says he's a full-time resident at the building and his three children are enrolled in nearby schools. Mr. Reid says the building can 'go dead' some weeks when many residents are gone, leaving hallways empty and his kids without playmates." ♦

That Was the Week That Wasn't

Where would we be without *Parade*? In its February 11 issue, the always-timely weekly ran a letter by Bonnie Redmond of Delaware, asking about the "latest" on Kentucky Derby winner Barbaro. The magazine was happy to inform Bonnie that, according to Barbaro's doctor, "The fractured right hind leg healed so well, he was out of his cast and walking daily. But he developed a condition in his left hind hoof requiring surgery on January 13. Since then, his comfort has improved, and he's stable." Whew. For a second, we thought they would have had to euthanize the horse—say, round about January 29.

Let us also not forget that *Parade* once ran a lighthearted "In Step With Gene Siskel" feature after the movie critic had died.

Next week: *Parade* goes shopping with Anna Nicole Smith! ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Casual

Don't Call Me Ishmael

The magazine *Edge*, on its tenth anniversary, recently asked a number of scientists and thinkers what they found in the world or in their particular lines of interest to be optimistic about. I'm pleased to say that I was not asked. I am of course not a scientist, but I might, just possibly, have passed for a thinker. A certain portentousness, sententiousness, general pomposity goes with being a thinker. Nobody has ever called me a thinker, and I'd like to keep it that way.

I have on a few occasions been called a National Treasure, which I much resented. You never want to be known as a National Treasure. Walter Cronkite is a National Treasure, so is Studs Terkel. Russell Baker may be a National Treasure. Poor Bill Moyers seems to have been born a National Treasure. The actress Helen Hayes was a National Treasure. A National Treasure is someone you can count on to say predictably uninteresting things while giving off the blurry aura of wisdom.

I don't think I've ever been called a humorist, which is fine by me. A humorist, poor fellow, is under the pressure of being relentlessly, and therefore drearily, funny. Much better to be sometimes witty, or even faintly amusing, than to be a humorist. The late Art Buchwald was a humorist, which perhaps explains why I never found him in the least funny. Andy Rooney ditto. No one has ever called me a humorist, and I am grateful.

I'm afraid that I've been called Professor thousands of times. True, I taught at a university for thirty years, but at least I did so without any advanced degrees. Besides, professors don't even look like professors anymore, and I look nothing like what they nowadays do look like. They wear backpacks and Nike gymshoes and baseball caps turned backwards. I prefer to think of a professor as the man who plays the piano in a bordello. The reason I never liked being called Professor is that it is synonymous with academic, a word that over the past forty years has become synonymous with ridiculous.

Darren Gygi

Because of my past university connection, I've also often been called Doctor, which causes me to giggle, at least inwardly. Sometimes I'll say that I have no doctorate, other times I just let people "doctor" me. A time or two when people have called me Doctor Epstein on the phone, I have told them to read two chapters of Henry James and get right into bed, instructing them that I'd be right over.

I have also been called a "man of letters." This once seemed a great honorific, but today there is something musty about the term, something that suggests less an endangered than a vanished species. I don't believe I have ever been called America's "last man of letters"; Edmund Wilson was always called that, and how it must have galled (if not bored the pajamas off) him to have heard it so often.

An Intellectual is another thing I've been called on various occasions, though never, I'm pleased to say, a Public Intellectual, a perfectly empty phrase. Intellectual is another of those words that has gone from approbative to pejorative in recent decades. An intellectual is someone who lives on, off, and through ideas, and used to be unconnected with institutions. Now an intellectual is someone who offers his opinions on talk shows and writes op-ed pieces; hence the adjective "public." Intellectuals have come to be known for not having a genuine stake in things, for being usually wrong in politics, for being distanced from reality, for being without responsibility. Not a good thing to be called, an intellectual.

In the good-bad old days of *Time* magazine, under the then famous *Time*style, where concision was important, a person was usually designated by a single word, thus: socialist Thomas, philosopher Dewey, editor Luce. Had I been born twenty or so years earlier, I might have appeared in *Time* as "essayist Epstein."

The reason I am uncomfortable about being identified as thinker, national treasure, humorist, professor, doctor, intellectual, or essayist is that none of them feels to me a good fit. I'm not a renaissance man either, and certainly no polymath; I'm not sure I even qualify as a unimath.

I prefer to think of myself as just plain Bill, the guy in the torch song, who's not the type at all. "Only my tailor fits me correctly," Samuel Johnson is supposed to have said when people wished to label him as this or that. Given Johnson's reputation as a notably sloppy dresser, it may well have been that even his tailor got him wrong. I, on the other hand, don't even have a tailor.

Joseph Epstein

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Defending Durhamites

Charlotte Allen writes in "Duke's Tenured Vigilantes" (Jan. 29) that Mike Nifong participated in a May 2 Democratic primary for reelection as district attorney and that he "handily" won both the primary and the general election. But the May 2006 election was not technically reelection, since Nifong had been appointed to the post in April 2005 and was running for the first time. Additionally, "handily" might not be the best description of Nifong's election victory.

In a three-way Democratic primary, Nifong won with 45.1 percent of the vote, and he had just 883 more votes than the second-place candidate (41.6 percent). Nifong's victory margin in the November election was much more substantial, but the circumstances had changed by the fall of 2006. Democratic candidates had entered the campaign season with a clear path to the district attorney's job. No other candidates were vying for the office. Nifong should have run unopposed on the November ballot.

But the outrage over his conduct prompted two other men to enter the race after the Democratic primary. One was a Republican who failed to secure enough petition signatures to appear on the ballot; he waged a write-in campaign instead. The second candidate was a popular Democratic county commissioner who did secure enough petition signatures to appear on the ballot as an independent candidate, then baffled supporters by telling them he didn't want the job. His campaign strategy seemed to suggest that voters should cast ballots for him so that he could then turn down the district attorney's post and force the governor to appoint someone else.

It is not surprising that Nifong was the winner in this confusing three-way race with a noncandidate and a candidate whose name did not appear on the ballot. Despite this campaign advantage, Nifong secured only 49.5 percent of the vote. So Mike Nifong has never won the support of a majority of Durham voters.

Mitch Kokai
Raleigh, N.C.

Good Counsel?

Sally Satel, in "First, Do Harm" (Feb. 5), is concerned that Dr. Miriam Grossman's "discussion of protection against HPV [a sexually transmitted disease] seems too negative regarding the value of condoms." I think college counselors should be negative about the use of condoms to prevent viral infection: The facts against the effectiveness of condoms in preventing disease transmission are well documented.

Grossman believes that traditional values of faith and family are essential to leading a rewarding life, but Satel worries that those struggling students not sharing these convictions might fail to benefit from Grossman's other messages. Well, so what, if students do not believe in these things? They still need exposure to such ideas. Faith cometh by hearing. Failing to expose troubled students to all the possibilities for help is doing them harm.

William M. Fittro
Marshall, Mich.

Correction

The caption for the photograph associated with Robert Zarate's "First Lady of Intelligence" (Jan. 22) incorrectly describes President Reagan as giving Roberta Wohlstetter the Medal of Honor. She received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, one of the highest American civilian honors, not the Medal of Honor, which is the nation's highest military decoration.

• • •

The Weekly Standard
welcomes letters to the editor.
Letters will be edited for length and clarity and must include the writer's name, address, and phone number.
All letters should be addressed:
Correspondence Editor
The Weekly Standard
1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505
Washington, DC 20036.

You may also fax letters: (202) 293-4901
or email: editor@weeklystandard.com.

Advertising Sales

Peter Dunn, *Associate Publisher pdunn@weeklystandard.com; 202-496-3334*

Nicholas H.B. Swezey, *Advertising Director nswezey@weeklystandard.com; 202-496-3355*
Robert Dodd, *Canada Advertising Manager bob@doddmedia.com; 905-885-0664*
Noel Buckley, *Canada Advertising Manager noel@doddmedia.com; 905-684-5085*
Patrick F. Doyle, *West Coast Advertising Manager patrick.doyle@mcginleydoyle.com; 415-777-4383*
Don Eugenio, *Midwest Advertising Manager doneugenio@weeklystandard.com; 312-953-7236*
Amanda Belden, *Account Executive and online sales abelden@weeklystandard.com; 202-496-3350*

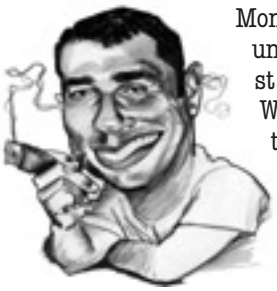
*For more information, visit **weeklystandard.com**, click on the **About Us** button at the top, and select **Advertise**.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SO JUST HOW ENTERTAINING IS A WEEKLY STANDARD CRUISE?

From last year's cruise diary by online editor Jonathan V. Last:

OUR THIRD IS JUNE 16–23, 2007



Monday, Day 3: "The Weekly Standard's second annual cruise is now underway. We left Saturday from San Diego just after 5:00 p.m. . . . and started Sunday with a lecture by Fred Barnes, who talked about George W. Bush, the nature of his relationship with official Washington, and the character of his presidency. . . . Afterwards there were panel discussions on the state of the Republican Party, the prospects for the new Supreme Court, and the future of the blogosphere and the New Media . . . . The Oosterdam is a pretty swank ship and the food so far has been top notch. . . .

WE'LL LEAVE SEATTLE AND GO NORTH TO ALASKA

WE'RE SAILING ON THE OOSTERDAM AGAIN THIS YEAR!

Tuesday, Day 4: "The Oosterdam made port [in Cabo San Lucas] just before 6:00 a.m. on Monday and from our little cove, you could hear seals barking while squadrons of pelicans circled overhead . . . . After long excursions onshore, dinner on the Oosterdam was, again, fantastic.

Wednesday, Day 5: "Tomorrow we put into Puerto Vallarta and The Weekly Standard programs pick back up with Phil Terzian leading a discussion on Steven Hayward's book on Churchill and Reagan, Greatness.

CHECK IT OUT AT HOLLANDAMERICA.COM!

Thursday, Day 6: "Not content with a program of mere panel discussions, lectures and fruity girl drinks, a group of Standard cruisers met up at 6:30 a.m. on Wednesday to strike out into our final port of call for various adventures. Some people went on hikes, others went swimming with dolphins, others flashed along zip lines on the forest canopy. . . .

BILL ONLY GIVES "GREAT" PRESENTATIONS

Friday, Day 7: "Thursday began with a great presentation by Bill Kristol on the state of world affairs, touching on domestic politics, the danger posed by Iran, and the fluidity of the post-9/11 world . . . . It's been a great week. From Cabo San Lucas to Mazatlan to Puerto Vallarta, all of our destinations made for fun visits. We had long hospitable dinner parties every night and lots of good conversations. . . . [and] some of the best interactions are the informal ones: bumping into new friends at the gym, or in the lounge, or even on the basketball court.

THEY'RE FINAL! EMAIL US NOW OR CALL 1–800–266–4043. RESERVE YOUR CABIN NOW!

"We're finalizing the plans for next year's cruise now and if you send us an email to twscruise@weeklystandard.com with your name and address, we'll let you know all the details so you can have first crack at getting a space onboard . . . ."

2007 CRUISE SCHEDULE

Date	Day	Ports of Call
June 16	Sat.	Seattle, WA
June 17	Sun.	At Sea
June 18	Mon.	Juneau, AK
June 19	Tues.	Hubbard Glacier
June 20	Wed.	Sitka, AK
June 21	Thurs.	Ketchikan, AK
June 22	Fri.	Victoria, BC
June 23	Sat.	Seattle, WA

Bill Kristol, Fred Barnes, Claudia Anderson, Phil Terzian, Jonathan Last, and Terry Eastland invite you to join them on an Alaskan adventure.

Don't miss the boat!

*For more, call **1-800-266-4043** or visit **www.twscruise.com***

THE CRUISE AUTHORITY

Holland America Line

the weekly Standard

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the weekly Standard

The Democrats' 'Slow-Bleed' Strategy

Politicians often say foolish things. Members of both parties criticize cavalierly and thunder thoughtlessly. They advance irresponsible suggestions and embrace mistaken policies. But most of our politicians, most of the time, stop short of knowingly hurting the country. Watching developments in Congress this past week, though, one has to ask: Can that be said any longer about the leadership of the Democratic party?

President Bush is sending reinforcements to join our soldiers fighting in Iraq. Democrats are entitled to doubt this will work. They are entitled to conclude the whole cause is hopeless or unjust—and that we should withdraw from Iraq as soon as possible or on some other more responsible timetable. They are entitled to move legislation in Congress to compel such a withdrawal, on a schedule and with provisions that seem to them appropriate.

But surely they should not fecklessly try to weaken the U.S. position in Iraq, and America's standing in the world, by raising doubts as to our commitment in Iraq without advancing an alternative. That is precisely what they are doing with the nonbinding resolution condemning the dispatch of additional troops to Iraq. The fact that some Republicans have embraced this resolution does not excuse the Democratic party for its virtually monolithic support of it. The GOP has its share of fools and weaklings. But it is the Democratic party that now seems willing to commit itself, en masse, to a foreign policy of foolishness and weakness.

For the nonbinding resolution passed by the House Friday is merely the first round. What comes next are legislative restrictions and budgetary limitations designed to cripple our effort in Iraq. As *Politico.com* reported Thursday:

> Top House Democrats, working in concert with anti-war groups, have decided against using congressional power to force a quick end to U.S. involvement in Iraq, and instead will pursue a slow-bleed strategy designed to gradually limit the administration's options. . . . The House strategy is being crafted quietly. . . . [Rep. Jack] Murtha, the powerful chairman of the defense subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee, will seek to attach a provision to an upcoming $93 billion supplemental spending bill for Iraq and Afghanistan. It would restrict the deployment of troops to Iraq unless they meet certain levels of adequate manpower, equipment and training to succeed in combat. That's a standard Murtha believes few of the units Bush intends to use for the surge would be able to meet. . . . Additional funding restrictions are also being considered by Murtha.

So the nonbinding resolution is only the first step in the slow-bleed strategy. The Murtha plan intends to block further relief and reinforcement for American troops, leaving them exposed and unable to succeed. Surely Democrats (and fellow-traveling Republicans) will turn back from this path while they still have time to save some of their honor. But the antiwar groups won't make it easy. John Bresnahan's *Politico.com* report continues:

> Anti-war groups like [Tom] Mazzie's are prepared to spend at least $6.5 million on a TV ad campaign and at least $2 million more on a grass-roots lobbying effort. Vulnerable GOP incumbents . . . will be targeted by the anti-war organizations, according to Mazzie and former Rep. Tom Andrews, D-Maine, head of the Win Without War Coalition. . . . Mazzie also said anti-war groups would field primary and general election challengers to Democratic lawmakers who do not support proposals to end the war. . . . Andrews, who met with Murtha on Tuesday to discuss legislative strategy, acknowledged "there is a relationship" with the House Democratic leadership and the anti-war groups, but added, "It is important for our members that we not be seen as an arm of the Democratic Caucus or the Democratic Party. We're not hand in glove." . . . "I don't know how you vote against Murtha," said Andrews. "It's kind of an ingenious thing."

No, the Democrats and the antiwar groups shouldn't "be seen" as "hand in glove." But they are. The national Democratic party has become the puppet of antiwar groups. These groups do not merely accept—reluctantly—American defeat in the Middle East. They seek to hasten it. Some seem to welcome it.

The leaders of those groups believe their slow-bleed strategy is "kind of an ingenious thing." In truth, it's not really so "ingenious." But it is disgraceful. In our judgment, it will fail as a political strategem, it will fail to derail the president's policy—and we will ultimately prevail in Iraq. The slow-bleed strategy will, however, stain the reputation of its champions, and of the useful idiots in both parties who have gone along with it.

—*William Kristol*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Excommunication for Thee . . .

Alan Wolfe's self-incriminating attack on Dinesh D'Souza. BY PETER BERKOWITZ

Alan Wolfe is a distinguished public intellectual. He is professor of political science and director of the Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life at Boston College. He is a longtime contributing editor to the *New Republic*. He is a frequent contributor to the Sunday *New York Times Book Review*. And over the course of many years, he has earned a reputation for overcoming political cant and scholarly rigidities to write penetratingly for the public about American political ideas and institutions.

So when Wolfe, from the platform provided by the aforementioned *Times Book Review*, calls for the excommunication of a conservative public intellectual, as he did on January 21 in a scathing critique of Dinesh D'Souza's *The Enemy at Home*, the judgment resounds. The force of that judgment, however, would have been greatly diminished had *Times* readers been aware that, like D'Souza, Wolfe has engaged in an immoderate post-9/11 attempt to expose the *real* enemy at home. Wolfe, it would seem, believes that one set of standards applies to conservative intellectuals, and another to intellectuals, like himself, who are on the left.

D'Souza has written a book that slides all too easily from the provocative to the polemical to the incendiary. Wolfe finds nothing right with the book and everything wrong with it. D'Souza's attempt to explain how Osama bin Laden is understood from the inside, by believing Muslims, is akin to "the Stalinist apologetics of the popular front period," and exhibits "a soft spot for radical evil." D'Souza's claim that conservative religious believers in America can find common ground with peaceful Muslim traditionalists, based on shared dismay over the decline of the family and the degradation of popular culture, warrants a scornful mention from Wolfe but not a refutation. Deriding D'Souza for the creation of a McCarthyite enemies list of leading leftists, Wolfe concludes by laying down criteria for the formation of a list of his own: "I look forward to the reaction from decent conservatives and Republicans who will, if they have any sense of honor, distance themselves, quickly and cleanly, from the Rishwain research scholar at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University."

There is ample reason to reject D'Souza's central theses. He contends that the "cultural left in this country is responsible for causing 9/11," but he provides no systematic inquiry and little evidence in support of so extreme an accusation. Moreover, his contention is undermined by his own discussion of Sayyid Qutb, the Egyptian-born intellectual father of radical Islam. For Qutb famously was scandalized by the popular culture he encountered at a church social in America in the late 1940s, two decades, on D'Souza's own account, before the emergence in the 1960s of the contemporary cultural left. Contrary to D'Souza, the jihadists hate America not in the first place because of feminism and egalitarianism, but because of our classical liberal beliefs in individual freedom and equality under the law, and their reverberations throughout all aspects of American society and culture.

Furthermore, D'Souza's assertion that left and right in America inhabit different moral universes distorts the situation. There is no doubt that tempers today are short and some policy differences do run deep. But generally, the disputes between right and left in America are not over rival conceptions of the political good but rather over competing ideas of what policies best serve individual freedom and equality under law.

As for D'Souza's charge that the cultural left represents a "domestic insurgency," it recklessly conflates disagreement, even vehement disagreement, which citizens are nonetheless inclined to settle through debate and elections, with war, which adversaries are disposed to resolve through death and destruction. Perhaps, as D'Souza asserts, some on the left, including some perched in and pontificating from high places, remain so convulsed with Bush hatred that in their hearts they would rather see America defeated in Iraq than the Bush administration vindicated. Yet it would still be wrong to confuse a fellow citizen's twisted passions with the murderous hatred of al Qaeda jihadists and Baathist insurgents.

To claim that by promoting, among other things, abortion, gay marriage, pornography, and atheism, the cultural left presents a threat to America as grave as that posed by radical Islam is seriously wrong and foolishly divisive. To make such an argument while America is at war with a fanatical adversary who regards all Americans as combatants and who seeks not concessions or reforms but America's annihilation is to blur critical issues when the rediscovery of our common ground is what is urgently called for.

So Wolfe is on solid ground with his hard-hitting criticism of *The Enemy at Home* and certainly has plenty of company on the right. Prominent and widely read conservative websites including *HughHewitt*, *Power Line*, *FrontPageMagazine*, and *National*

Peter Berkowitz teaches at George Mason University School of Law and is the Tad and Dianne Taube senior fellow at Stanford's Hoover Institution.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Review Online have found severe flaws in the book, as has D'Souza's and my Hoover colleague, military historian Victor Davis Hanson, at *Townhall.com* and *Real Clear Politics*.

Wolfe's attack, though, is distinguished by his demand that decent and honorable conservatives "distance themselves, quickly and cleanly" from D'Souza. Apparently, conservatives who fail to promptly and unambiguously pronounce anathema are tainted by and complicit in D'Souza's errors and excesses. This is more than ironic coming from a writer who, like D'Souza, darkly proclaimed that America is menaced by an enemy at home. For Wolfe, as it happens, the enemy within does not arise from the cultural left but rather springs from Republicans and the right. His thesis no more withstands scrutiny than does D'Souza's, but by comparison has received very little.

Wolfe put forward his accusation in April 2004 in an essay in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* entitled "A Fascist Philosopher Helps Us Understand Contemporary Politics." Likewise proceeding from the provocative to the polemical to the incendiary, Wolfe argued that "to understand what is distinctive about today's Republican Party," you have to understand the ideas of Nazi political theorist Carl Schmitt. Wolfe named names—heading the list are Ann Coulter and Bill O'Reilly—but his aim was to illuminate a widely shared sensibility. While conceding that Republicans and conservatives have probably not studied Schmitt, he nevertheless maintained that "Schmitt's way of thinking about politics pervades the contemporary zeitgeist in which Republican conservatism has flourished, often in ways so prescient as to be eerie."

Wolfe had in mind Schmitt's analysis in an essay from the early 1930s, *The Concept of the Political*. But to contrive the case for an affinity between Nazi political theory and contemporary American conservatism, Wolfe distorted the essence of Schmitt's doctrine.

Schmitt argued that "the political," which represents "the most intense and extreme antagonism," rests on the distinction between "friend and enemy." The distinction "denotes the utmost degree of intensity of a union or separation, of an association or dissociation." Seeking an understanding of the distinction that was precise and pure, Schmitt asserted that "the friend and enemy concepts are to be understood in their concrete and existential sense, not as metaphors or symbols, not mixed and weakened by economic, moral, and other conceptions." So understood, the enemy involves "the real possibility of physical killing." In essence, the enemy is the people or state with whom another people or state goes to war:

> The enemy is not merely any competitor or just any partner of a conflict in general. He is also not the private adversary whom one hates. An enemy exists only when, at least potentially, one fighting collectivity of people confronts a similar collectivity.

Notwithstanding Schmitt's argument that the political, properly understood, concerns a people's or a state's determination to resolve disputes by force of arms, Wolfe is determined to understand conservative party politics in America as Schmittian in character. It is true, as Wolfe subsequently argued in the *Chronicle* in an exchange of letters with critics (including me) in which he did not yield an inch, that for Schmitt, "'an antithesis and antagonism remain . . . within the state's domain which have relevance for the concept of the political.'" It is also true, as Wolfe noted, that in extraordinary circumstances domestic politics deteriorates into civil war. But it is just as true that Schmitt was specifically concerned not with the residue, not, as he emphasized, with conceptions that are "mixed and weakened," but rather with "the nature of the political." And civil war is no longer party politics.

It is risible, therefore, for Wolfe to seek to assimilate Ann Coulter's vitriol and Bill O'Reilly's grandstanding to Schmitt's concept of the political. They are writers and talkers, often shouters, public performers, and certainly culture warriors. But they are no more disposed to take up arms against the left than is the left disposed to take up arms against them. In their acceptance, for all practical purposes, of individual rights and the democratic process, they are, from a Schmittian point of view, liberals indistinguishable from Wolfe himself.

The supposed fascism of today's conservatives, argues Wolfe, helps us understand their electoral successes: "Conservatives win nearly all of their political battles with liberals because they are the only force in America that is truly political." For conservatives, he contends, "politics never stops" and is driven by rank partisanship indifferent to the public interest; liberals are "unworthy of recognition"; rights must be trampled upon and the power of the state to deal with emergencies must be relentlessly expanded because "conservatives always find cases of emergency." By contrast, claims Wolfe, liberals such as himself seek consensus, believe in pluralism, honor toleration, question their own convictions, and respect individual rights. Thus does their vastly superior morality doom liberals in their battle with today's ruthless neofascist conservatives. Except when it doesn't, for example a few months ago, in the 2006 midterm elections.

Wolfe's incendiary accusation, however, goes beyond this election or that, and is not affected by the existence of some on the left who may support Bush administration foreign policy and some on the right who may oppose it. What is critical, according to Wolfe, is to recognize that conservatives in America "stand against not only liberals but America's historic liberal heritage."

The threat posed by America's conservative enemy at home, in Wolfe's view, can hardly be exaggerated. By importing to America's shores a style of thought that is un-American, Wolfe explained in his response to his critics, conservatives have disfigured American politics:

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Conservatives on the U.S. Supreme Court broke with principle to decide the 2000 election on naked partisan grounds; the president so chosen has pursued the most partisan course of any president since Reconstruction; and he has used an attack on all Americans to pursue an agenda that benefits only some of them. Our politics are ugly because conservatives have disproportionately contributed to making them ugly.

Wolfe seems incapable of entertaining the possibility that *Bush* v. *Gore* was a hard case, one of whose reasonable resolutions was the path chosen by the Supreme Court; that in domestic politics Bush has rather consistently pursued the policies he has publicly defended, has done little to stir the pot on abortion and affirmative action, has formally but not aggressively opposed same-sex marriage (as did Senator John Kerry in the 2004 campaign), and has made his peace with the welfare state; and that driven by partisan rage, Bush's opponents have often shamelessly misrepresented the administration's arguments and actions on national security. Yet given the available evidence in support of these propositions, shouldn't entertaining them, in our angry times, be one distinguishing mark of a liberal mind?

Wolfe's contention that conservatives are animated by the spirit of a Nazi political theorist is scarcely less incendiary or more defensible than D'Souza's claim that the cultural left forms a de facto alliance with al Qaeda. Yet whereas numerous prominent conservatives have been quick to publish their disagreements with D'Souza, who on the left rose to challenge Wolfe's excesses?

By Alan Wolfe's standards, a decent and honorable left would have cleanly excommunicated the Boston College professor long before he used the pages of the *New York Times Book Review* to demand the excommunication of a conservative for speech unbecoming a public intellectual. Happily, Wolfe's standards don't govern. And in a liberal democracy that cherishes open and vigorous public debate, they shouldn't. ♦

Europe's Iran Problem

Problem? What problem?

BY DANIEL JOHNSON

London

The leaders of Europe can no longer pretend that they don't know what Iran is up to. A leaked internal document prepared for the European Union's foreign ministers warns that it is probably too late to prevent the Iranian government from acquiring nuclear weapons. "At some stage we must expect that Iran will acquire the capacity to enrich uranium on the scale required for a weapons programme." The document also admits that efforts to impede the Iranian nuclear program have failed. "In practice . . . the Iranians have pursued their programme at their own pace, the limiting factor being technical difficulties rather than resolutions by the U.N. or the [International Atomic Energy Agency]." Nor do the limited sanctions announced by the U.N. Security Council hold out any hope: "The problems with Iran will not be resolved through economic sanctions alone."

So now they know. Years of diplomacy have made virtually no difference. Carrots and sticks have been tried and failed. The regime in Tehran is determined to become a nuclear power—the first nuclear power with a yearning for martyrdom. Europe's strategy has hitherto been merely to play for time—but time is on Tehran's side.

Europe's reaction? Nil. By tacit agreement, it has been left to Israel and the United States to hint at possible military action to destroy the nuclear facilities that European companies have helped to create. Europe has done little to isolate Iran or put pressure on its leaders and its people. Germany and other European Union states head the list of trading partners with Iran. As was the case with Iraq, the fact that so many Europeans are making so much money out of an evil regime has contributed to Europe's political paralysis.

Yet Europe has an overwhelming interest in preventing the emergence of an Islamist bomb. European territory would be directly threatened by a nuclear-armed Iran, equipped with long-range missiles. Europe would also be in greater danger than the United States from terrorist organizations armed with radioactive ("dirty") or even nuclear bombs from Tehran. Iranian terrorists have a history of setting off bombs in Europe. Nuclear blackmail is far more likely to be used against European states than against the United States, and European states are judged by Tehran to be far less likely to retaliate than Israel.

For these and many other practical reasons, Europe should be reacting far more vigorously than it is to the Iranian provocation. But there is an even more important reason Europe should be forcing the issue rather than appeasing the mullahs.

The moral case for stopping President Ahmadinejad and Supreme Leader Khamenei in their tracks is that both have vowed to annihilate Israel. Ahmadinejad's threat ("Israel must be wiped off the map"), repeated in different forms several times over the past two years, is well known. He was quoting Ayatollah Khomeini, whose successor as supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, set out his solution to the Middle East problem in 2000: "the annihilation and destruction of the Zionist state." The

Daniel Johnson, a journalist in London, is a columnist for the New York Sun *and a contributor to* Contentions, *a blog at* Commentarymagazine.com.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

means to accomplish the eradication of Israel are now almost in their grasp.

Why, the political establishment of Europe implicitly asks, should we lift a finger for Israel? Well, Israel is Europe's orphaned offspring. It was Europe—specifically Britain—that conceived the Jewish National Home in Palestine with the Balfour Declaration in 1917. It was Europe—specifically Germany, but with help from collaborators in almost every nation on the Continent—that drove hundreds of thousands of Jews to emigrate, and then murdered six million who could not escape. It was Europe—specifically the E.U.—that gave the Holocaust a unique status in defining the values that Europe's institutions enshrine. Generations of children have been taught that the commemoration of the Holocaust is not only a moral imperative, but constitutive of European civilization.

Now that the threat of a second Holocaust is staring Europe in the face, however, its leaders are in denial. Worse: They seem insouciant. Why is the E.U., which makes so much of its humanitarian credentials, which sees itself as a creature of the Enlightenment, so seemingly indifferent? The answer, I fear, lies in the process that has deprived Israel of legitimacy and branded Zionism as a relic of European imperialism. That process has been grinding away for decades, but only now is it becoming plain that Europe's vast superstructure of collective atonement for the Holocaust has been hollowed out from within. The calumny that Israel—the most liberal and egalitarian country in the Middle East—is an "apartheid state" has hardened into a conviction. The mud has stuck.

Yet if Israel is attacked and—God forbid—destroyed by Iranian nuclear bombs, then European civilization will have perished, too. The destruction of Israel would signal the demise of the Judeo-Christian morality that ennobled Greco-Roman culture to create the only Europe that was ever worth preserving. I for one could not live in a society that could even contemplate such a second Shoah. I would turn my back on such a Europe, shake the dust from my feet, never to return. ♦

To Be Continued

The Democratic Congress's inadvertent budget reform.

BY YUVAL LEVIN AND JAMES C. CAPRETTA

Amidst the clang and symbolism of the new Democratic Congress's first month, between the hundred-hour marathon and the posturing about Iraq, a peculiar thing has happened. In a matter of a few weeks, with only minor controversy and little fanfare, a 2007 federal budget has taken shape that includes only modest increases over last year's spending, some minor substantive adjustments to programs, and essentially no earmarks. The House passed it on January 31. The Senate followed suit last Wednesday. It happened for political convenience but, inadvertently, may point the way to a better appropriations process. If congressional conservatives are paying attention, they may just find in this ad hoc experiment an exceptional opportunity for budget reform.

The budget in question is technically not a budget at all, but a "continuing resolution" or CR. CRs are typically used to bridge the gap between the start of a new fiscal year and enactment of a regular, full-year appropriation. Continuing resolutions do not enumerate resources for every agency and program. Instead, they use formulas to "continue" funding at a previously established level, usually the amount provided in the prior year, plus or minus some percentage. The last CR was enacted in December by the previous Congress and expired February 15.

The CR just passed to replace it is not typical, however. For starters, it is not a temporary measure. It continues funding for all federal agencies and programs that have not yet gotten a full annual appropriation—that's everything except Defense and Homeland Security—through September 30, the end of the fiscal year. In other words, for most federal agencies, this CR is the last word for 2007, and will stand as their budget for the year.

Further, CRs are usually brief documents, as it takes just a few pages to specify a funding formula and provide rules for special circumstances requiring exceptions. The House-passed CR is not brief, however; it runs 137 pages with some exceptions provided in just about every department and agency of government. Many of the exceptions are understandable and necessary, as there are some critical agencies that simply cannot function well at last year's funding level. Of course, some exceptions also reflect the Democratic majority's spending priorities.

The Bush administration has stated that the total funding provided in the bill is acceptable, but complained that the formulaic approach shortchanges certain new priorities and fails to seize "opportunities for savings." Fair enough. But these criticisms have more to do with substantive disagreements with congressional leaders over spending priorities than the process used to get there.

And the process Congress has followed this winter has much to commend it, particularly when compared with what usually happens. Congress's "regular order," as it is called, involves 11 separate appropriations bills every year, each crafted through a lengthy and often incomprehensible process of committee and subcommittee action. The House and Senate appropriations committees draft, consider, and amend

Yuval Levin and James C. Capretta are fellows at the Ethics and Public Policy Center.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

each of the 11 different bills and bring them separately to the floors of the respective chambers for debate and amendment. Each chamber passes its bills, and the two then work out their differences in conference before sending a final version to the president.

Under the best of circumstances, the process takes many months—starting in the spring and ending in September, before the start of the new fiscal year on October 1. But the best of circumstances almost never occur. Fundamental disagreements between the parties over budget priorities mean that, in a normal year, the minority party has little to gain from cooperation. The Senate often poses a particular challenge in this regard; without unanimous agreement on the terms of debate, any senator can bring the chamber to a halt for days on end, making progress on contentious spending measures nearly impossible.

In a typical year, Congress bravely embarks on the appropriations journey in late spring, with ritual expressions of determination to finish on time. Sometime in early fall, however, after one of the bills has gotten hopelessly bogged down in the Senate, the leaders are forced to admit defeat and pull the plug on the regular process. Whatever bill has managed to make its way through both chambers becomes the vehicle for an "omnibus" measure encompassing the entire rest of the budget. Weeks then pass as the appropriations committee chairmen work in secret to assemble a bill that stands a foot high on members' desks. The 2005 omnibus appropriations bill ran more than 3,000 pages. Late in the year, the omnibus emerges from a closed-door conference committee and is presented as a "take it or leave it" proposition to rank and file House and Senate members, most of whom could never have the time to read it even if they wanted to.

This way of doing things is not only convoluted and inefficient, it also creates a natural breeding ground for earmarks and micromanagement. Members with a gift for manipulating the numerous (and often hidden) contortions of the process can tuck away a great number of spending requirements in the folds of the gargantuan bills. In the 2006 process, Congress passed more than 12,800 earmarks. Depending on who you ask, this year's continuing resolution has either completely eliminated earmarks or buried a modest number in the fine print.

In the coming months, as the government lives under this new CR without the sky falling, perhaps the time will come to ask what is wrong with making something like this—a trimmed-down process by which Congress each year formally amends the previous year's budget rather than starting from scratch—the new budgeting routine?

One potential disadvantage of a continuing resolution approach is a diminution of Congress's much-vaunted "power of the purse." But for too long, Congress has confused its power of the purse with the executive's authority to manage the daily operations of the government. The federal budget has become a tool of micromanagement, which neither improves the functioning of government nor serves the interests of its constituents. Earmarks and comically specific mandates to the executive are not the power of the purse. Congress, through its power to appropriate, can set priorities for the federal government and require the executive to serve those causes, but a process that hides key priorities beneath mountains of minutiae does not serve that purpose. A budget process that involves necessary changes, rather than a set of massive and indecipherable *ex nihilo* bills each year, would not reduce the power of the Congress to legislate changes in the way public money is spent. It would merely rein in the capacity of Congress to do so in the dark, and beyond its proper bounds.

Executive branch supremacists, meanwhile, could argue that such an approach might actually limit the president's sway, since his ability to use the veto would be constrained. Rather than confronting 11 separate bills, each of which he could threaten to veto for causes unique to that bill, he would now be confronted with a short list

THERE'S A WEEKLY STANDARD EMAIL NEWSLETTER, TOO!

The Weekly Standard Newsletter, edited by online editor Jonathan Last, can appear in YOUR inbox every Friday afternoon.

You'll get a preview of the upcoming issue and commentary from our editors.

And the best part? **It's *FREE*.**

Go to *weeklystandard.com* and sign up today!

the weekly Standard.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of amendments to the previous year's budget, which he would have to take whole or reject entirely. But in fact, the current broken budget process often produces the same result—only with a massive omnibus budget bill rather than a brief and manageable continuing resolution.

A further objection may be that CR-type budgeting would limit the ability of government to respond to changing circumstances. But by enacting exceptions and revisions, Congress could direct its attention to key national needs, and, by giving the executive more leeway in execution (combined, ideally, with more stringent oversight), such a process could actually improve the responsiveness of the federal budget to changing priorities—recognizing that such changes are in fact few and rare, but important.

Finally, fiscal conservatives might argue that building each year's budget on top of the previous year's would set in stone programs that ought to be reconsidered each year. But the current budget process already works that way. As Ronald Reagan once remarked, "a government bureau is the closest thing to eternal life we'll ever see on this earth." The key difference in a refined CR approach would be to lessen the room in the process for fraud and abuse, and for earmarks and hidden new spending. If Congress wished to eliminate a program, it could do so through an exception or rescission.

True, if Congress were in the habit of routinely cutting spending, a refined CR approach would not make sense. But since novelty in the budget almost always means new and greater spending, an approach that highlights and constrains the new should be welcome to fiscal conservatives. It would act as a natural restraint on the appropriations process, and would trim fat from a system that has grown morbidly obese.

An annual continuing resolution may not be ideal, but it would be significantly better than the process we have now. It could evolve into the most significant budget reform in decades and an enormous, if unintended, gift from the new Democratic Congress to the cause of budget discipline. ♦

But Will People Listen?

Bush goes after the Democrats.

BY FRED BARNES

The White House, an aide to President Bush says, is "ratcheting up the rhetoric" against congressional Democrats who seek to restrict the president's ability to send more troops to Iraq. The president is sending Democrats a clear signal that their worst fear may come to pass. If they persist in trying to keep the president from deploying reinforcements in Iraq or attempt to cut off funding for the war, they may be blamed for *not* "supporting the troops." This is not a difficult case to make. The question is whether Bush has enough persuasive power left to make it effectively.

Three factors are working against Bush. The first is that he's in the seventh year of his presidency. That's normally when the public grows tired of the president and pays less attention to his pronouncements. The second is the press. With Democrats taking over Congress, reporters and editors are now more interested in what House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is doing than in covering Bush's every word. Third is the Iraq war itself. Public opinion is running against the war by roughly a two-to-one margin.

The president still has the best bully pulpit in the world: the nationally televised prime time speech. But presidents turn to it so often that, in their last years, it produces limited returns. Bush discovered this in January when he delivered two primetime addresses and failed to alter public opinion either on the Iraq war or his presidency.

But now he has begun to skewer Democrats where they are most sensitive and politically vulnerable: their support for the troops in the field. Democrats are desperate not to be seen as undercutting the troops, even as they try to force the president to begin drawing down American combat operations.

Bush used a press conference last week to assert that the proper test for foes of the war will be whether they provide "flexibility and support" for troops in Iraq. "I think you can be against my decision [to deploy 21,500 more soldiers] and support the troops," he said. "But the proof will be whether or not you provide them the money necessary to do the mission."

Bush added: "What's going to be interesting is if they don't provide the flexibility and support for our troops that are there to enforce the strategy that David Petraeus, the general on the ground, thinks is necessary to accomplish the mission." Senate Democrats unanimously approved the promotion of Petraeus to four-star general recently, but Democrats in both the House and Senate oppose the "surge" of troops Petraeus insists is required to secure and pacify Baghdad.

The Bush statement prompted House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer to rush before the media and declare: "We will not abandon, we will not underman, not undersupply, we will not undertrain, and we will not defund those who we have put in harm's way. We will support our troops today, tomorrow, and every day thereafter."

The next day, Bush returned to his point in a speech to the American Enterprise Institute, again citing the popular general to buttress his case. "This may become the first time in the history of the United States Congress

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that it has voted to send a new commander into battle and then voted to oppose his plan . . . to succeed in that battle," the president said.

Bush noted Congress will soon take up an emergency funding bill for Iraq. "Republicans and Democrats have a responsibility to give our troops the resources they need to do their job and the flexibility they need to prevail," he said.

Democrats don't want to provide such resources, but they don't want to use the crude instrument of a fund cutoff either. That might be politically dangerous. In the Senate, Majority Leader Harry Reid has refused to allow a vote on a Republican resolution calling for continued funding. In the House, Democrats have embraced a clever approach that would not directly deny funds but would make it all but impossible to send reinforcements to Iraq.

This, however, is probably too clever. It's transparent what House Democrats are trying to do, which is defund the war indirectly. In fact, they come close to admitting as much, only they've cloaked their proposal in limitations on future deployments to Iraq, to make it look like they're protecting the troops.

To counter this ploy, it's crucial for the president to make headway in his debate with antiwar Democrats. He doesn't have to win the argument overwhelmingly. He only needs to scare Democrats away from trying to curb his authority to carry out the war and especially to continue the Petraeus-led campaign in Baghdad.

Democrats should already be nervous. They risk imitating the disastrous tack Republicans took in the late 1990s. In impeaching President Clinton, Republicans misinterpreted their mandate and overreached. Now Democrats are over-interpreting the results of the 2006 election and may suffer politically just as Republicans did.

In 1974 and 1975, President Ford failed to persuade Democrats or the public that funds should not be cut off from the South Vietnamese Army. Despite his low popularity, Bush is in a better position than Ford was. He has the stronger case and, unlike Democrats, he also has the advantage of being free to make it in a straightforward manner. So far, he's made it quite well. ♦

Cruise the breathtaking Alaskan coast with your favorite Weekly Standard pundits

Enjoy seven exclusive days and nights June 16–23, 2007.

- *Special private Weekly Standard sessions and programs*
- *Dining with editors and writers*
- *Private receptions*
- *Traveling with like-minded conservatives*
- *All-inclusive pricing*
- *A fully escorted cruise*

WEEKLY STANDARD 2007 CRUISE

Date	Day	Ports of Call
June 16	Sat.	Seattle, WA
June 17	Sun.	At Sea
June 18	Mon.	Juneau, AK
June 19	Tues.	Hubbard Glacier
June 20	Wed.	Sitka, AK
June 21	Thurs.	Ketchikan, AK
June 22	Fri.	Victoria, BC
June 23	Sat.	Seattle, WA

For more information, call 1-800-266-4043

Holland America

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What's in a Name?

Ask Taiwan.

BY GARY SCHMITT AND JOHN TKACIK

The Bush administration, which once pledged to do "whatever it takes" to defend Taiwan, is increasingly distancing itself from the prosperous and democratic island. This has been going on since August 3, 2002, when Taiwan's president, Chen Shui-bian, first declared that "each side [of the Taiwan Strait] is its own nation." Although this assertion had the benefit of being true, it incensed Beijing's leaders, who pressured the United States into rebuking Chen, in exchange for possible Chinese support at the United Nations when dealing with Iraq.

Now, in a move that is bound to aggravate Beijing even further, Taiwan's government is saying that they do not want to identify their "Palace Museum" with China's identically named "Palace Museum," or confuse their "Republic of China" postage stamps with Beijing's "People's Republic" stamps, or pretend that Taiwan's "Chinese Petroleum Corporation" is actually "Chinese." And, indeed, last week, the government changed the post office's name to Taiwan Post Co., changed the China Shipbuilding Corporation to the acronym CSBC, removed the word "province" from the Taiwan Water Corporation, and removed the word "China" from the Chinese-language name of what is now the Central Bank.

These changes were opposed by Washington. The State Department chastised the government of Taiwan saying, "We do not support administrative steps by the Taiwan authorities that would appear to change Taiwan's status unilaterally or move toward independence." These steps include "changes in terminology for entities administered by the Taiwan authorities."

Gary Schmitt is resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute and John Tkacik is senior research fellow at the Heritage Foundation.

Since 1979, when the United States cut formal diplomatic ties with the "Republic of China"—that is, the government of Taiwan—it has banned official U.S. government use of the term "Republic of China." Yet, in the *Alice-in-Wonderland* logic of Foggy Bottom, the State Department criticizes the Republic of China for using the word "Taiwan," even while addressing its statement to the "Taiwan authorities." Meanwhile, out at Langley, the CIA lists "Taiwan" in its *World Fact Book* not under "China," nor alphabetically, but at the end, after Zimbabwe. And under "Name: conventional long form" it says "none," when in fact the "conventional long form" of the name of Taiwan's government is "The Republic of China." So, while the State Department complains about the decision in Taipei to drop "China" in exchange for "Taiwan," the CIA is desperately trying to avoid using the term "China" in reference to Taiwan.

This would all be quite amusing if it weren't so deadly serious. Names matter.

China insists that Taiwan keep the name "Republic of China" in order to legitimize implicitly its claim that Taiwan is part of "one China" and, hence, part of its sovereign territory. By going along with this, the United States actually fuels China's sense of entitlement—or, more accurately, its resentment over the fact that it doesn't rule Taiwan.

But the United States has not recognized Chinese sovereignty over Taiwan since at least April 11, 1947, when then-Acting Secretary of State Dean Acheson, in a letter to Senator Joseph Ball, stated that "the transfer of sovereignty over Formosa to China [had] not yet been formalized." Taiwan, then called Formosa, had been a colony of the Japanese Empire from 1895 until the end of the Second World War, when Japan "renounced all right, title, and claim" to the island as a condition of Japan's surrender. When, in 1951, a formal peace treaty with Japan was concluded in San Francisco, China was not represented, because of a disagreement among the signatory powers as to which government actually represented it. The delegate of the United Kingdom stated for the record that the "treaty also provides for Japan to renounce its sovereignty over Formosa and the Pescadores Islands. The treaty itself does not determine the future of these islands," a position that all parties, except the Soviet Union, adopted. The Soviet delegate grumbled that "this draft grossly violates the indisputable rights of China to the return of integral parts of Chinese territory: Taiwan, the Pescadores, the Paracel and other islands."

In the context of the Korean War, the Cold War, and the Sino-Soviet alliance, the U.S. position, as articulated by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles in a presentation to British foreign minister Anthony Eden in October 1954, was that the sovereign status of Taiwan "was deliberately left undetermined, and the U.S. as a principal victor over Japan has an interest in their ultimate future. We are not willing that that future should be one which would enable a hostile regime to endanger the defensive position which is so vital in keeping the Pacific a friendly body of water."

The State Department formally restated this position to the U.S. Senate in 1970: "As Taiwan and the Pescadores are not covered by any existing international disposition, sovereignty over the area is an unsettled question subject to future international resolution." And President Ronald Reagan, as part of his "six assurances" in 1982 to Taiwan president Chiang Ching-kuo, declared that "the United States has not changed its long-standing position on the matter of Taiwan's sovereignty." Every succeeding U.S. administration has reiterated its adherence to that assurance—though without spelling it out, which is probably why Foreign Service officers in the Department of State and staffers on the National Security Council have come to lose sight of this fundamental fact.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

But understanding its implications is more urgent than ever. China continues its military buildup and is close to being able to make good on its threats to coerce Taiwan into accepting its rule, while fewer and fewer of Taiwan's citizens—less than 5 percent in recent polls—think of themselves as Chinese. And the "name game" Washington, Beijing, and Taipei are playing now is a reflection of the tension generated by the inconsistencies and contradictions in America's "one China" policy. We want a peaceful resolution of the Cross-Strait dispute, but can do little to stop the Chinese military buildup and shy away from doing all we can to buttress Taiwan's defenses. We want to promote democracy globally, but find it problematic that a democratic Taiwan has no interest in becoming unified with a despotic China and wants, naturally enough, to be recognized by the rest of the world as a legitimate self-governing state.

At the moment, Beijing is dictating how Washington and, for that matter, Americans think about Taiwan. In late January, the New York Yankees signed an agreement with Chinese officials to help support China's fledgling baseball leagues in exchange, they hope, for getting a leg up on marketing the Yankees in China. At the press conference announcing the agreement, general manager Brian Cashman referred to Yankee pitcher Chien-Ming Wang, who last year tied for the most wins in the American league, as coming from "Chinese-Taipei." While doing so no doubt pleased his Chinese Communist hosts, it was undoubtedly an embarrassment for Wang, a national hero in Taiwan, to have his country tossed aside for the sake of the Yankees' commercial interests. Of course, the Yankees have not been the only ones to go down this road. And the real issue here is not whether the Yankees or Major League Baseball can sell a few more baseball caps and shirts in China. The real issue is that by playing this game we are not moderating Chinese ambitions toward Taiwan but fueling them. ♦

Ramping Up the Violence

The truth about the Temple Mount controversy.

BY DAVID GELERNTER

Israeli government authorities are building a ramp to allow non-Muslims to reach the enormous platform atop the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. The old access ramp was condemned as unsafe and torn down several years ago. The interim ramp that replaced it was designed for short-term service only. (Muslims control the Temple Mount and therefore have their own private access routes.) The new ramp is controversial. *Some* ramp must be built or non-Muslims will have no way to reach the Mount; but leading Israeli archaeologists say that the ramp under construction is badly placed and ought to be someplace else.

This dispute among Israelis is important but in itself would never have attracted much attention. However, by the nature of their reactions, Arab leaders have brought worldwide notoriety to the story—and made it a blood-curdling study in the power of lying in this credulous, ignorant global-media age.

Outraged Arab politicians describe the new ramp as an attack on the Al-Aqsa Mosque—although the mosque is on the Temple platform and the ramp stands outside the platform on pylons, and won't have any effect on the mosque at all. But those are mere facts. Prominent Arab agitators disdain even to notice them. Some have called for violence against Israel because of this imaginary assault on the mosque. And we know what "violence against Israel" means to the Jew-hating anti-Zionists among Arab statesmen: restaurants, sidewalk cafés, bus stops, and Passover seders drenched in blood and scattered with smashed body parts as dying children cry quietly.

The leader of the Islamic Movement in Israel, Raed Salah, announced in response to the ramp project that "the danger in Jerusalem has increased. It is high time for the intifada of the Islamic people." The prime minister of the Palestinian Authority, Ismail Haniyeh, called the construction project "continued Israeli aggression on Al-Aqsa Mosque and Jerusalem." An Egyptian MP, Mohamed el-Katatny, announced in parliament, "That cursed Israel is trying to destroy Al-Aqsa mosque. . . . Nothing will work with Israel except for a nuclear bomb that wipes it out of existence."

This hysterical Arab reaction must be understood in context. Why are Muslim religious authorities in charge of the Temple Mount anyway—Judaism's holiest site, in the heart of Israel's capital city? And who built the Temple Mount in the first place, and what makes this site holy? When we answer these questions—keeping in mind that the ramp story is likely to be reported nearly everywhere (outside the United States and Israel) from the Arab viewpoint—the real question becomes *not* whether this ramp should be finished (probably not), but how to heal an insane planet. The ramp can be taken down; but how can the Arab world be cured of its blood-lust against the Jews of Israel?

Let's start with the situation on the ground. Prominent Israeli archaeologists object to the new ramp because several of its footings stand in an important archaeological garden outside the Mount. They agree that a

David Gelernter, a national fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, is a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AFP / Getty Images / Awad Awad

An earth-mover, with the Western Wall in the background, February 7

new ramp is necessary, but insist that it be routed around the garden. Some Orthodox Jews are unhappy with the project on religious grounds.

The Israel Archaeology Association, which approved the project, responds that you can't please everyone, especially in Jerusalem, least of all near the Temple Mount. If the ramp is moved, other groups will object. Which is a weak-sounding response—or perhaps no response at all, merely an excuse.

But Arab objections have nothing to do with the archaeological garden; Arab leaders are worried (they say) about the safety of the Al-Aqsa mosque. Yet the ramp poses "no risk whatsoever to the Al-Aqsa Mosque, which stands about 100 meters to the east," says the eminent archaeologist Eilat Mazar of the Shalem Center and the Hebrew University. Mazar is one of the archaeologists who object to the ramp's current location and want it moved.

Is it possible that Arab leaders are more interested in attacking Israel than protecting religious and cultural monuments? How anxious are Arab statesmen to protect the treasures of the Temple Mount? Let's step back a few years and see.

The Temple Mount is ruled by the Islamic authority of Jerusalem, the Waqf. The Waqf is supposed to respect the status quo and ask Israeli approval before making changes. In 1996, the Israeli government approved a Muslim request to build a large new underground mosque on the Mount. Construction began, and a request to build an "emergency exit" for the new mosque followed, and was also approved.

Enormous excavations were carried out. Thousands of tons of soil and fill were scooped out and trucked away. Those trucks were filled with some of the most precious stuff in the world. The Temple Mount is potentially the most important, exciting place on earth for archaeological digs.

A huge platform is balanced atop the Mount, shored up by enormous earth-and-stone works. King Herod the Great of Judea built this platform in the first century B.C. as a base for an enlarged, rebuilt Temple. (The Temple was the focus of Jewish ritual and pilgrimage.) But Herod's magnificent Temple was burnt to the ground by Roman forces under Titus, later emperor of Rome, in 70 A.D. The Jews had rebelled against Roman overlordship—Herod himself had been a Roman client; they fought hard and lost. Rome was the only superpower of the day. On Titus' arch of triumph in Rome you can still see carvings of the plunder that the Romans carted home from Jerusalem—including the famous seven-branched Temple menorah, later destroyed accidentally by fire.

The Romans grabbed as much as they could, but left behind innumerable traces of the Temple and of life in the Second Jewish Commonwealth, in the age when Jesus preached and the Mishnah was composed. There must be other archaeological treasures up there too, fragments of Jewish, Roman, Byzantine, and Muslim life in the centuries following the Roman rampage. Infrared photographs and other survey techniques suggest the presence of vast underground halls beneath the platform's surface. Some ancient rabbinic sources assert that the Ark of the Covenant, lost since the destruction of the First Temple in 586 B.C., was buried on the Temple Mount; it might conceivably be standing in one of those underground chambers.

But the Waqf has a nice, simple policy regarding archaeological digs on the Mount. Don't bother applying; none are allowed. The world's most important archaeological site is off-limits to archaeology.

Under the circumstances, those underground excavations for the new mosque and its "emergency exit" looked like a stroke of qualified good luck. (The exit turned out to be a 2,000-square-meter pit that entailed the removal of over 6,000 tons of earth.) All that indescribably precious soil was scooped out, trucked away—

And trashed. Hundreds of truckloads were unloaded in *municipal garbage dumps*. Some drops were made late at night. This was vandalism on a breathtaking scale, and the vandals knew it. (In fact removing the soil was a crime in itself; archaeologists need to inspect soil in situ to understand the context and to know which layers were

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on top, what came next, and so forth.) All in all this was a sickening crime against the human spirit, a rape of the Mount. But radical Arab leaders routinely deny that a Temple ever existed in this place. They would love to annihilate every trace of Jewish history as they would love to destroy the Jews themselves. For would-be murderers, destroying truth is the next best thing to destroying life.

The precious soil was left unprotected, and garbage accumulated on top. Archaeologists managed to sift through certain portions that remained accessible. Important finds turned up. But "we are certain," Mazar said recently, "that a vast amount of important data was lost."

The Israeli government let it happen; ignored the outcry of Israelis and of archaeologists all over the world and allowed construction and dumping to continue. "The world's patrimony is being carried off in dump trucks," wrote Hershel Shanks (editor of *Biblical Archaeology Review*) in the *Washington Post* in July 2000. "All who care about the archaeological remains on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem . . . should be incensed at Israel's failure to stop the Waqf . . . from illegally destroying precious remnants of history important to Muslims as well as to Jews and Christians." An open letter to Prime Minister Ehud Barak, signed by dozens of prominent Israelis of all political colors, demanded that Barak stop "a serious act of irreparable archaeological vandalism and destruction."

But he didn't. Many believe that the Barak government refused to act lest the "peace process" be interrupted or Arab violence break out. According to this (all-too-likely) explanation, a pathetically self-deluded Israeli government, conscious of the long, venomous history of Arab and world reactions to Israel, was too anxious and weak to stop this ugly crime.

The Islamic Authority of Jerusalem is no one's idea of a competent protector of one the world's most precious sites. How did it come to be in charge of this spot in the first place?

When the United Nations voted in 1947 to create twin states in British Palestine, a Jewish and an Arab state side-by-side, the city of Jerusalem was to be internationalized and belong to neither. The Zionists accepted this plan but the Arabs rejected it—and in May 1948, the armies of Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Egypt, and the Arab Legions of Transjordan attacked the new Jewish state. They failed to destroy it but did capture half of Jerusalem—the important half, the Old City, where the Temple Mount stands. For the next 20 years the Kingdom of Jordan refused to allow Jews into the Old City, refused them access to the Western Wall—and systematically destroyed the city's synagogues, presumably as proxies for the Jews who got away.

Egypt provoked another war with Israel in 1967 (the Six Day War) by demanding that U.N. troops be withdrawn from the Sinai buffer zone and blockading the Straits of Tiran. During the fighting, Israeli soldiers recaptured the Temple Mount. They discovered that Jordanians had torn up Jewish tombstones from the Mount of Olives and used them to pave roads and build latrines. And yet soon afterward Israel unilaterally awarded control of the Mount to the Waqf. It was the same sort of pathetic, heartrending gesture that speaks of desperate longing for friendship and *no more war* that Barak made 30 years later, when he allowed the Waqf to pillage and violate the Mount.

That generous Israeli gesture of the late 1960s was met by universal gratitude throughout the Arab world, especially among the Palestinians of Jerusalem.

Just kidding.

Virtually all such Israeli gestures meet with the same response: redoubled hatred. (In one of the first Israeli digs in Jerusalem after the Six Day War, archaeologists found a previously unknown Muslim palace. "The finds from the early Muslim period are thrilling," said a high ranking official in the Jordanian Antiquities Department at the time, named Rafiq Dajani, "and frankly I am surprised that Israeli scholars have made them public." A few days later he was fired.)

How did it all come to be in the first place? Perhaps it is worth pointing out the obvious: Muslims revere this site in consequence of the Temple that once stood here.

Nowadays some cosmopolitan thinkers speak of the Temple as if it were a folk story or fairy tale or an "alleged" building. But it was as real as the World Trade Center. No sane historian doubts its existence. It is attested in many contemporary sources, Jewish and otherwise.

One report asserts that Titus did not intend to burn the Temple, and said that "the loss would be for Rome. Its continued existence will be a glory of the Empire." But the fighting raged out of control, and the Temple caught fire by accident. In any case, writes Simon Goldhill, professor of Greek at Cambridge University, the Temple "was the largest and most awe-inspiring religious monument in the world." Speaking of the extraordinarily refined and sophisticated engineering that went into Herod's project, Goldhill refers to the Platform's southern retaining wall—which "gives some sense," he writes, "of the [enormous] size of the stones and the brilliance of the wall's construction. There is nothing like this anywhere else in the ancient world."

Israelis created (long ago) the platform on the Temple Mount and the Temple itself, and the religious community that gave it all meaning—a gift to mankind that is valuable beyond measure. Thousands of years later, Israel turned over the keys to the Waqf in a peace offering, an act of friendship. Roughly 30 years after that, they allowed their Arab brethren to pillage and destroy invaluable records of ancient history rather than disturb the "peace process" or the Palestinian Arabs. And so today, Arab leaders demand (in violent outrage) that the world protect the Al-Aqsa Mosque—their precious, sacred cultural treasure—by stopping an Israeli construction project that won't go anywhere near it.

They are showing the world a rare combination of laughable hypocrisy and terrifying evil. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

'Civilization' and Its Contents

A video game for the ages

By Victorino Matus

If you think the first videogame ever made was Pong in 1972, guess again. If you think it was Spacewar!, a 1962 concoction of the MIT Tech Model Railroad Club, you are also wrong. The answer is Tennis for Two, designed by William A. Higinbotham, a physicist at the Brookhaven National Laboratory on Long Island. The year was 1958. Higinbotham wanted to entertain the locals at the lab's open house. According to Heather Chaplin and Aaron Ruby, authors of *Smartbomb: The Quest for Art, Entertainment, and Big Bucks in the Videogame Revolution*, the game's "net" was strung across an "oscilloscope's five-inch screen." The "ball" was "a single green blip. Willy attached two boxes with a knob and a button each to the oscilloscope, so that people could control the motion of the ball as it bounced back and forth." The game was a big hit but, as Higinbotham saw it, Tennis for Two was strictly a novelty—what purpose did it serve?—and after two years he dismantled it.

Today, videogames are a $10 billion industry—a couple of years ago their sales surpassed U.S. movie box-office receipts—and still people are asking the Higinbotham question. Some have blamed videogames for juvenile delinquency and violence. Take Grand Theft Auto, in which you can rise through the ranks of a criminal enterprise and "power up" with prostitutes. In one version of this game, players were able to unlock a secret sex scene (known as "Hot Coffee"), creating an outcry on Capitol Hill. Or take Left Behind, based on the bestselling pulp novels aimed at Christians fascinated with the End Times, in which you must convert others to Christianity and, if they refuse, you can kill them. Delinquency aside, given the amount of time some people spend on the games, especially on their employers' computers, you have to wonder if that $10 billion in sales isn't more than wiped out by the loss in productivity.

Victorino Matus is an assistant managing editor at The Weekly Standard.

Was Higinbotham right? Should we have pulled the plug? Maybe. But then we wouldn't have games like Civilization, the thinking man's Grand Theft Auto, the videogame version of a classical education. Yes, there is the potential for violence, on a global scale no less. But really the game is more of a grandiose chessboard than a combat zone. Here's how it works.

Let's say you are "Caesar of the Romans," presiding over a tiny tribe at the dawn of time. You send out settlers to found cities across the continent and discover resources like horses and iron, and luxury goods such as wine and silk. The governors of your cities ask you what they should build—barracks, a temple, a marketplace? At the same time you must decide what your scientists should study—developing the wheel is always a good first step. As your nation begins to take shape, you will inevitably run into other civilizations, such as Egypt and Carthage, or maybe even the Germans and the French. All of these other powers (regardless of when they existed in real history) originate at the same time as yours, circa 4,000 B.C. And from ancient times up to the present and beyond, it is a race to see which of the various civilizations becomes culturally or militarily dominant.

And you don't always have to rule Rome either. You could be Genghis Khan of the Mongols. Or Isabella of Spain. Each civilization has its characteristic strengths and weaknesses. For example, if you control the Japanese, when your scientists discover the chivalric code, you are able to create ruthless Samurai warriors. The trick, as always, is timing. You may think the key to the game is to be the founder of American civilization, and get busy building F-15 fighter jets. But it will take millennia (a few hundred turns, in game time) for your scientists to get up to speed. First, they will need to study physics and engineering, not to mention combustion. Meanwhile, the Greeks almost immediately produce their hoplite—the most fearsome infantryman of the ancient world.

The most addictive aspect of the game is its turn-based system: When you are finished issuing orders for the management of your cities and deploying your troops, you

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hit the spacebar, allowing the computer to play out the moves of the other civilizations. A few seconds later, it is your turn again. It may take 20 turns to build a great wonder like the Hanging Gardens or 12 turns to learn fission. Every time you hit that spacebar, you get closer to your objective. The tagline for Civilization is "You won't stop playing until you *want* to stop playing."

Sound appealing? Since the first version of Civilization came out in 1991, about 8 million units have been sold. The current edition, Civilization IV, has sold more than 3 million copies worldwide in the last two years. Search the word "civilization" in Google and over 42 million hits will result, with an astonishing proportion of them dedicated to the game. Civilization's adherents are found in college dorms, faculty lounges, boardrooms, army barracks, and probably in the cubicle next to yours, where your coworker seems to spend an inhuman number of uninterrupted hours hunched over his keyboard. The players are about 90 percent male, most between the ages of 18 and 45. Many pick the game up in college but continue playing for years afterwards. Their ranks include celebrities such as Will Smith, Robin Williams, and Drew Carey.

Speaking of celebrities: A movie or book or CD of such mammoth popularity would by now have turned its creator into the prey of paparazzi. But Sid Meier, the creative genius behind Civilization, is decidedly a noncelebrity. He turns 53 this month. He was born in Canada and raised in Michigan. After graduating from the University of Michigan, where he studied computer science, Meier went to Hunt Valley, Maryland, to work for the General Instrument Corporation, which made computerized cash registers for department stores. Meier had always taken an interest in computers—his first PC was an Atari 800 in 1979. Soon, he was making his own games, which caught the attention of his coworker, Bill Stealey. The two formed a game development company, MicroProse, in 1982, and over the next decade Meier would design such titles as Spitfire Ace and F-15 Strike Eagle (flight simulators), NATO Commander, Silent Service (a submarine simulator), Railroad Tycoon, and, finally, Civilization.

"Twenty years of making very good games is a feat few other designers can claim," says Ted Halsted, cofounder of Human Head Studios and lead level designer for the games Prey and Rune. "The brightest bulbs typically have one or two good titles and then get out of the business or coast along on past success. But not Sid and his codesigners. His work touches upon a wide range of topics, which is unusual in an industry marked by specialization and repetition." Halsted was not the only one to take notice.

In 1999, Meier became the second person inducted into the Academy of Interactive Arts and Sciences Hall of Fame (the first being Nintendo's Shigeru Miyamoto, the creator of Super Mario Bros.). Meier is widely regarded as the "father of computer gaming." And yet, despite all the accolades, Sid Meier is the prototype of a computer programmer, of modest dress and demeanor.

To be blunt, programmers, gamers, and hackers are often depicted as misfits. In Chaplin and Ruby's *Smartbomb*, they can even seem frightening: attending the annual Game Developers Conference are "albinos and men covered in angry red acne. Guys with blow-up plastic dragons on their shoulders, slouchy velvet hats, long ponytails, big fat bellies, tiny concave chests, dandruff on their shoulders, and random piercings." Some of them have dark pasts, such as John Romero and John Carmack, creators of the highly successful game Doom. According to *Masters of Doom* author David Kushner, when Romero was in high school, he illustrated his own comic book featuring "10 Different Ways to Torture Someone," such as "Poke a needle all over the victim's body and in a few days . . . watch him turn into a giant scab" and "burn the victim's feet while victim is strapped in a chair." When Carmack was 14, he broke into a school to steal Apple II computers, was arrested, and sent for psychiatric evaluation (the report mentions "no empathy for other human beings"). Carmack was then sentenced to a year in a juvenile home.

Or take Will Wright, the genius behind SimCity and the best-selling PC game of all time (more than 6 million copies, not including expansion packs), the Sims, in which you control the everyday lives of virtual individuals. Chaplin and Ruby describe how Wright typically interacts with others: "He turns his entire six-foot narrow frame and peers down at the person. And then he waits. He doesn't say anything. He just stares, like a computer waiting for input. It's enough to cause enthusiasts to falter, reporters to wince, and executives to laugh nervously."

After this introduction to the species, my meeting with Sid Meier came as a relief. As cofounder and director of creative development for Firaxis Games, Meier still works and lives in Hunt Valley, just north of Baltimore and about 15 miles from the Pennsylvania border. The company has 80 employees (compared with 7,000 for Electronic Arts, the world's largest videogame producer). Located in a nondescript office park, Firaxis occupies the top three floors of a hideous black and brown brick building. There is no gourmet cafeteria like the one at Google, but there is an Outback Steakhouse across the street. In the Firaxis lobby stands a trophy case containing numerous Game of the Year awards and an Xbox featuring the game Sid Meier's Pirates! I

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

am led through the "fun zone," where programmers and designers seek respite from writing code. The day I was there, four employees sat on a couch playing one of the Tom Clancy Rainbow Six thrillers. Two other staffers were playing Ping Pong (real, not electronic). Upstairs there is a foosball table and a disassembled train set.

I asked Meier what happened to the train, but he hadn't a clue, joking that "it seemed like a good idea at the time." He is a cherubic man, just under six feet. With an occasional, almost imperceptible lisp, Meier can sometimes sound like the actor Wallace Shawn. (*Never go in against a Sicilian when death is on the line!*) By virtue of his age, Meier belongs to the last generation of videogame designers (along with Will Wright) who grew up before the computer.

"It was a sad time. We had to make up our own games," he says with more than a hint of sarcasm. "So I played board games, strategy games, war games. I had blocks, Tinkertoys, real toys." Meier was also a history buff. "I remember when I was 8 years old, I took this long trip and my dad gave me this Civil War book, a kind of picture book of the Civil War, and I guess I was interested in those kinds of things at the time." Those kinds of things were to make a lasting impression. A former colleague at MicroProse, Bruce Shelley, recalls how Meier had been dreaming of a Civil War game for years. "The whole genesis of that game was this *American Heritage History of the Civil War* that had these beautiful handpainted pictures of battlefields, with all the soldiers running around—that was the image. He was going to build the whole game around the concept of those images that were burned into his brain as a child." This resulted in two games, Sid Meier's Gettysburg! and Sid Meier's Antietam! where the player assumes the role of a general on the battlefield.

Meier cites the strategy board game Risk as one of his major influences. "Conquer the world. All those cool pieces. You felt like you were king. It gave you a lot of power." What about the game Diplomacy? "You had to have friends to play Diplomacy so that kind of left me out."

Civilization followed on the heels of Meier's Railroad Tycoon, which was released in 1990, and the smashing success of Will Wright's SimCity. Both are considered the earliest of the so-called "God games," in which all-powerful players focus primarily on building rather than destroying. Rather than overseeing a railroad operation or micromanaging a city, Meier thought, "Let's ramp this up to a bigger stage, the whole world, the history of the world. And as we thought about that, all sorts of ideas popped into our heads. It just seemed like a very rich and fertile area [for] a game. And the whole Risk experience as a child I am sure tied into that. Wouldn't it be fun to make a game where it ends up where you conquer the entire world? That was kind of the seed of the game. And then we played with it, came up with technologies, science, politics, and economics and put all that stuff in the game."

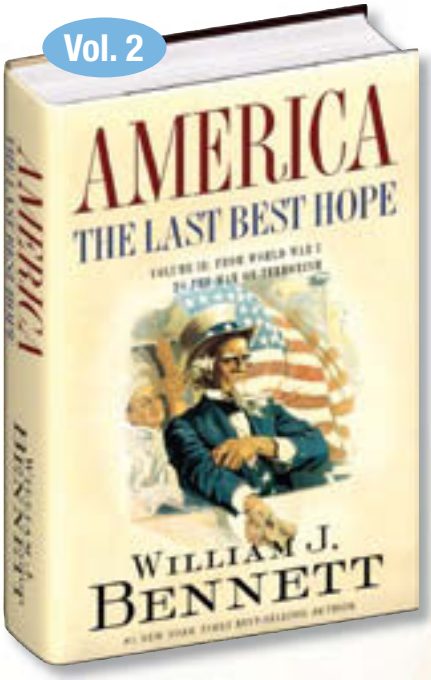
Shelley, who later helped design Age of Empires, a hit competitor to Civilization, looks back fondly on his time with Meier, which he likens to attending Game Design University. Meier, he recalls, came up with a basic definition of a game: a series of interesting decisions. "You have game play, you have competition, and then you have victory," explains Shelley. "A true game would have all three of those elements. Something like SimCity has the decisionmaking but it doesn't have competition or victory. It's a digital sandbox," not a game.

Shelley recalls quite clearly the day in May 1990 when Meier approached him with a disk and said, "Try this and tell me what you think." It was the first playable prototype of Civilization, which he still has. "That's how I found out this new game was going to be worked on. And basically [Sid] and I played and coded it every day and discussed it every day for maybe four, five, six months *before* he would let anybody else play it." He adds, "It's so much what I wanted to play that I figured, if I'm an average game player and there's millions of me around the planet, then the game is going to be a massive success. I couldn't measure it, but I just knew it was going to be a very successful game, and I knew we were making something that was going to astound the world."

Echoing these sentiments, Brian Reynolds remembers how "back in those days, we just tried to invent games that *we* would like to play and then hoped enough gamers would feel the same way." Reynolds worked with Meier on the multimillion-selling Civilization II and other spinoffs prior to becoming the CEO of another studio, Big Huge Games. "Sid is easily the smartest and most brilliant person I've ever worked with—he could always cut right to the key issue in any big muddle, and he constantly had weird and unexpected thoughts, did things in ways that nobody had thought of, and yet they most often turned out great."

And other times not so great. Some games, like Colonization, didn't sell nearly as well as Civilization II, and Alpha Centauri wasn't nearly as big as Civilization III. But neither were they disasters. (The greatest videogame disaster of all time was 1982's E.T. for the Atari system. It did so poorly that 5 million unsold copies of the game were eventually dumped into a New Mexico landfill.) As Firaxis released newer and better versions of Civilization, a massive fan base soon emerged. Wilson Gan began playing Civilization in 1997. He is now a 26-year-old student in New York pursuing a master's degree in computer science. In 1998, Gan created a personal homepage with a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

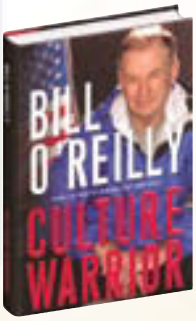


Respected scholar William Bennett reacquaints America with its heritage in the second volume of *America: The Last Best Hope.* This engaging narrative slices through the cobwebs of time, memory, and prevailing cynicism to reinvigorate America with an informed patriotism.

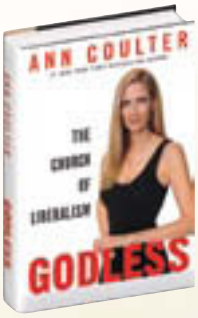
0406 ~~$29.99~~ **NOW 20¢**

AMERICAN COMPASS™

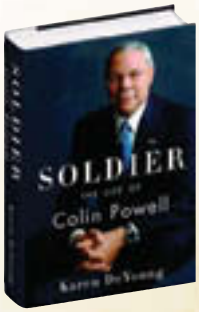
The Conservative Alternative



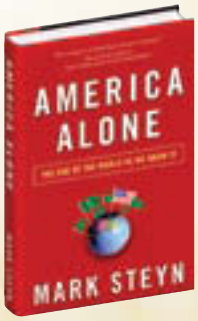
3566 ~~$26.00~~ **NOW 20¢**



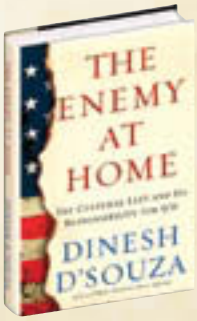
2261 ~~$27.95~~ **NOW 20¢**



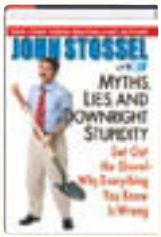
3996 ~~$28.95~~ **NOW 20¢**



3970 ~~$27.95~~ **NOW 20¢**

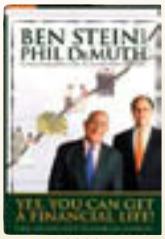


4333 ~~$26.95~~ **NOW 20¢**

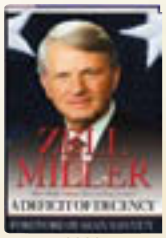


2345
~~$24.95~~ **NOW 20¢**

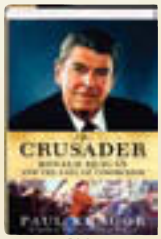
0737
~~$23.00~~ **NOW 20¢**



0398
~~$24.95~~ **NOW 20¢**



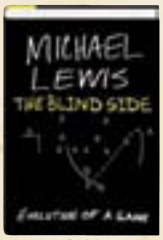
0299
~~$27.95~~ **NOW 20¢**



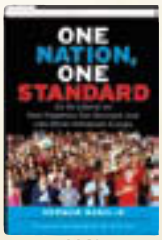
4085
~~$29.95~~ **NOW 20¢**

3293
~~$24.99~~ **NOW 20¢**

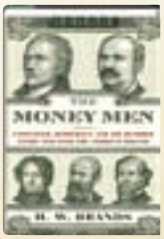
4275
~~$23.95~~ **NOW 20¢**



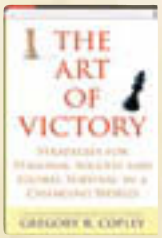
4739
~~$24.95~~ **NOW 20¢**



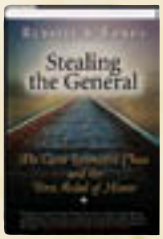
1149
~~$23.95~~ **NOW 20¢**



3459
~~$23.95~~ **NOW 20¢**

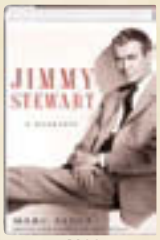


4168
~~$25.00~~ **NOW 20¢**

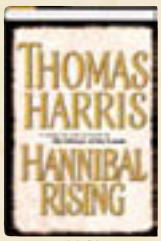


4242
~~$24.95~~ **NOW 20¢**

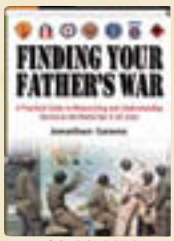
0646
~~$26.95~~ **NOW 20¢**



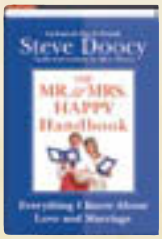
4192
~~$25.95~~ **NOW 20¢**



0240
~~$27.95~~ **NOW 20¢**



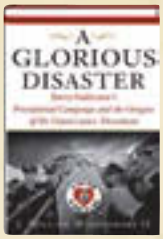
***4531-9999**
~~$19.99~~ **NOW 40¢**



4309
~~$23.95~~ **NOW 20¢**

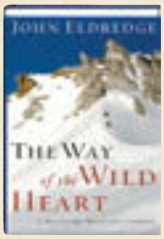
4481
~~$27.00~~ **NOW 20¢**

4150
~~$25.95~~ **NOW 20¢**

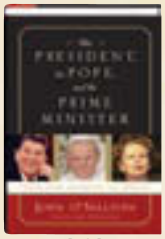


4440
~~$26.95~~ **NOW 20¢**

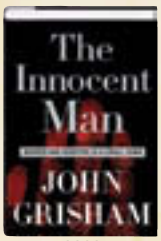
0281
~~$26.95~~ **NOW 20¢**



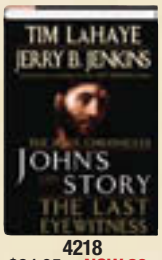
4416
~~$22.99~~ **NOW 20¢**



4564
~~$27.95~~ **NOW 20¢**



3392
~~$28.95~~ **NOW 20¢**

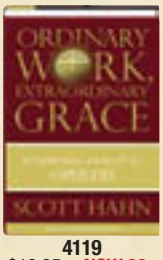


4218
~~$24.95~~ **NOW 20¢**

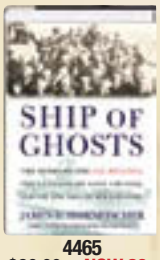
4580
~~$24.99~~ **NOW 20¢**

Softcover

0661
~~$19.95~~ **NOW 20¢**

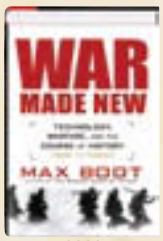


4119
~~$19.95~~ **NOW 20¢**



4465
~~$26.00~~ **NOW 20¢**

3731
~~$22.99~~ **NOW 20¢**



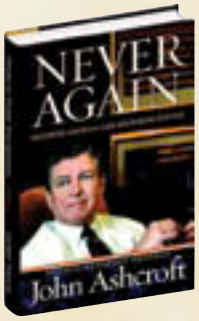
3822
~~$35.00~~ **NOW 20¢**

2253
~~$29.99~~ **NOW 20¢**

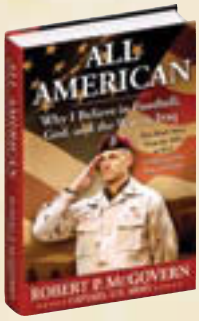
Join online today at www.JoinAmericanCompass.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

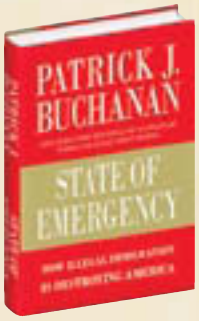
"I have been a reader all my life and American Compass points me in the direction I want my next read to take."
—William J. Bennett



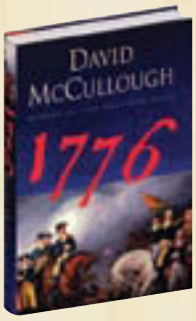
0752 $24.99 NOW 20¢



0562 $25.95 NOW 20¢

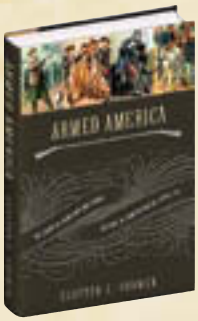


0778 $24.95 NOW 20¢

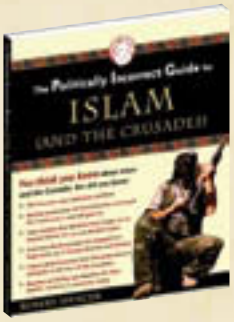


0133 $32.00 NOW 20¢

0687 $25.00 NOW 20¢



0596 $26.99 NOW 20¢

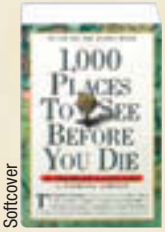


0216 $19.95 NOW 20¢

Softcover

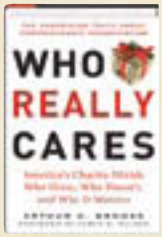
0604 $27.95 NOW 20¢

Softcover



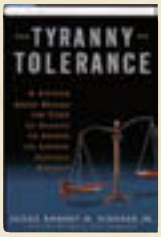
3145 $18.95 NOW 20¢

4093 $23.95 NOW 20¢



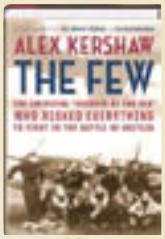
4317 $26.00 NOW 20¢

4267 $22.99 NOW 20¢

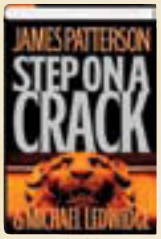


0638 $26.95 NOW 20¢

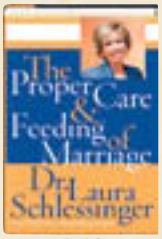
0679 $19.95 NOW 20¢



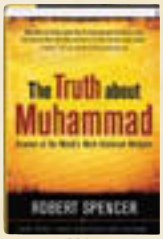
0497 $25.00 NOW 20¢



0703 $27.99 NOW 20¢

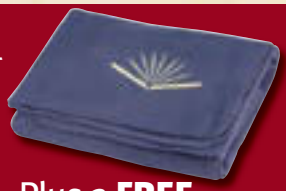


0794 $25.95 NOW 20¢



4127 $27.95 NOW 20¢

Choose 5 books for $1 with membership



Plus a **FREE** Fleece Blanket with membership

★ CURRENT AFFAIRS ★ FAMILY MATTERS ★ FAITH ★ ★ BESTSELLERS ★ HISTORY ★ REFERENCE ★

Here's How Membership Works • **Choose 5 Books for $1 and receive a FREE GIFT** with membership. Buy 2 books within the next year, after which you may cancel at any time. You can make your first club purchase now for $5.99, plus shipping and handling and reduce your commitment to just 1 book in the next year. • **Send No Money Now.** Once membership is confirmed, qualifying members will be billed $1 (plus shipping & handling, and sales tax where applicable), unless notified otherwise. Certain members may be asked to prepay for this and future orders until payment history is established. • **Satisfaction Guaranteed.** If you're not satisfied with your Introductory Package, return it within 20 days of receipt *at our expense.* Your membership will be canceled and you'll owe nothing — and if you've already paid, it will be credited/refunded. The FREE GIFT is yours to keep. • **You'll save up to 50% off** publishers' edition prices and save up to 65% with special sales and offers. Club editions are full-length books, sometimes changed in size to save you more. • **FREE Club Catalogs** are sent to you up to 13 times a year (about every 3 weeks). The catalog reviews the Editor's Main Selections (their top picks) plus a variety of alternate titles. To get the Main Selection, do nothing; it will come to you automatically. To order another book, or no book at all, you may call us, reply on our member Web site, or return your Reply Card by the deadline date indicated. A shipping & handling charge (and sales tax, where applicable) is added to each order. If the catalog is delayed and you had less than 10 days to notify us, you may return any unwanted Main Selection you received *at our expense*, and we'll credit your account. ***Counts as 2 choices x Special Edition** CON0702PT-01

SAVE UP TO $155
OFF PUB. ED. PRICES WITH THIS OFFER

AMERICAN COMPASS™
The Conservative Alternative

Mail to: ***American Compass***
PO Box 6503
Camp Hill, PA 17012-6503

*Please write 4-digit book numbers here:

☐ **Yes!** Please enroll me in *American Compass* according to the risk-free membership plan described in this ad. Send me the 5 BOOKS I have indicated at right, with membership. Bill me $1.00, plus shipping and handling. I agree to buy just 2 more books in the next year. Please send my FREE Gift with membership. Initial Here:_____

Must be 18 & over or parent must sign.

Do you have a telephone? ❒ Yes ❒ No
Have you ever bought anything by mail? ❒ Yes ❒ No
How have you paid? ❒ Cash ❒ Credit Card ❒ Check ❒ Money Order 604

Mr./Mrs. Miss/Ms. _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ ZIP _____

▼ **For great online-only sales, please provide e-mail address.** ▼

*If you select a book that counts as 2 choices, write the first 4 digits of the book number in one row of boxes and 9999 in the next.

Satisfaction Guaranteed!

SAVE MORE NOW! I wish to order another book for $5.99, plus shipping and handling (billed later) and reduce my commitment to only 1 book in the next year. Books that count as 2 choices are not eligible.
▼ Write book number here:

For faster ordering, join online at www.JoinAmericanCompass.com

5FX24U ← **Go Online and enter this Code**

1•30•7•3A•1•24U•02•A(-)•604

CON0702PT-01 2/19/07

Members accepted in USA only. Sales tax added where applicable. Membership subject to approval. This offer is good for 1 year.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

section on Civilization II containing useful tips, marking the beginning of the Civilization Fanatics' Center (*www.civfanatics.com*), which currently gets 6 million page views per month. The Civ Forum has more than 100,000 registered members.

"It's addictive and rewarding," says Gan, who also goes by the name "Thunderfall" (the name of a city in the Viking civilization). "There is always something interesting to look forward to within just a few turns. It's very satisfying to see a Stone Age village transforming into a modern metropolis, or seeing 'We Love the King Day' fireworks when you manage your cities well. Of course, conquering the world feels very good too."

Jason Keisch will sometimes get the itch to play as the Germans "when I feel like I'm in a conquering mood, racing to the Panzer special unit. When I feel more like outproducing everyone, India is my top choice." Fair enough. Keisch is a happily married IT consultant in Boston. "My wife doesn't mind the videogames unless I get too loud [while playing with others on a network]. She would much rather I stay home . . . than go out to the bars with the guys." The way he sees it, "back in the day you used to have bowling night. I like to play videogames."

And then there is my friend who rules his civilization with an iron fist. His secret for maintaining control over a foreign city? "I starve the city to death, then I populate it with my own people."

As Meier says, "The game kind of lets you be yourself."

Civilization has a range of levels ascending in difficulty, from "Settler" to "Deity," sometimes known as the Sid level. Ironically, Meier has never won at this level. His excuse? "When we're developing, it's hard to finish a game. A lot of times, you play for a while and say, 'Oh, this or that ought to change.' People in the real world get better than us. I mean, there are people who are just so willing to spend the time."

Take, for example, WEEKLY STANDARD contributor and *First Things* editor Joseph Bottum, who has, in fact, won at the Deity level in Civilization III. He first began playing Civilization II in 1995 when he was a professor at Loyola College in Baltimore. "Among real aficionados," he says, "the goal was to see whether you could launch a spaceship before you reached A.D." The Deity level of Civ III posed more of a challenge, though Bottum eventually found a winning strategy—one involving an ancient civilization whose prime achievement appears early in the game, such as Egypt with its war chariots.

"We picked a topic with pretty universal appeal," says Meier. "We made a game that wasn't that hard to play but had a richness to it that people grew to appreciate. It tapped into things people already knew. I think it made people feel smart when they said, 'I'm going to develop the wheel or electricity or gunpowder. I know all this stuff and I'm in charge here.'" Besides that, "people like to be in these positions in games that they probably don't have a chance to be in real life and it tapped into that fantasy to a certain extent of being the leader of a civilization and having the destiny of all these people depending on you, and that was fun."

When Meier is not playing and testing his products, he spends his time with his wife and 16-year-old son (with whom he enjoys other videogames, like Guitar Hero). He plays keyboards and jams with a band consisting of members from his local church. The band's name is Faith Unlimited. The church he and his wife attend is Lutheran.

Religion plays a major role in Civilization and can be more vital to victory than military prowess. Competing civilizations can send out missionaries, found a religion, create temples, cathedrals, and even launch crusades. Meier is quick to point out, however, that the role of religion is just another dimension to gameplay. The same goes for choosing nuclear power or heading a government that isn't democratic—you could opt to run a fascist or Communist regime, though these choices all have consequences. (Your citizens may be less happy, but also less prone to rioting thanks to your secret police force.)

Nevertheless, Meier's faith puts him at odds with other game-design geniuses like John Carmack, John Romero, and Will Wright, who are all avowed atheists (and Meier is, incidentally, the only one from this group to have graduated from college). To be sure, Meier has the utmost respect for them and their pioneering work. But it is yet another factor that sets him apart.

When Carmack and Romero decided to introduce blood and gore in their breakthrough 1992 game Wolfenstein 3-D, they voluntarily rated themselves PC-13 for "profound carnage"—a brilliant marketing ploy. Later, when Romero realized Carmack had found a way to enable players to interact with each other on a network, as noted in *Masters of Doom*, his thought was: "Sure, it was fun to shoot monsters, but ultimately these were soulless creatures controlled by a computer. Now gamers could play against spontaneous human beings—opponents who could think and strategize and scream. *We can kill each other!* 'If we can get this done,' Romero said, 'this is going to be the f—ing coolest game that the planet Earth has ever f—ing seen in its entire history!'"

It's difficult to imagine the soft-spoken Sid Meier having the same reaction. "Those other guys," adds Bruce Shelley, "you look at their games, what kind of picture are they painting with their games? You look at Sid's games, I

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

think what you're going to find is the kernel of a young man, a little boy, and the things he loved as a kid."

"We don't get into glorifying the violence and the gory stuff," says Meier. "That's just not the games that we like to do. I've raised a son and I know all the messages, all the influences, all the things that come into a young person's life, and we're responsible for a part of that. I mean, as game designers, we want people to play our games, so I think we need to take some responsibility for the content and the messages that come through our games."

Ultimately, Meier hopes people will want to read more about the subjects treated in his games. "I think people like to learn." And he might be on to something—at least when it comes to Laszlo Korossy. The 21-year-old junior at Catholic University has been playing Civilization in one form or another since the age of five, at a time when he spoke mostly Hungarian and knew only a handful of English words. At first, he says, "it was all just a game. I would then run into certain historical concepts, and as I started learning about history in school, I would see these concepts reappear. I already knew the word 'feudalism' in the first grade. I had no idea these concepts from the game were based on reality. But the game provided me with this framework through the years, a sense of familiarity."

"History was never a chore for me to study. It was always about going deeper into this game," says the history and international politics major, whose college application essay revolved around Civilization. Laszlo is also converting to Lutheranism. But this, he says, has nothing to do with Sid Meier.

Back at Firaxis, Meier and his team are hard at work on their next project, knowing their fans are eagerly waiting. Unfortunately, we can only speculate since, he explains, "we're not at the point where we're ready to talk too much about it." One possibility is a game about creating dinosaurs, an idea he called DinoMon, which he shelved years ago. But chances are, the next product will be related to the Civilization series. And yet there may come a time when replayability is completely exhausted—after all, the current edition features 18 civilizations, including Arabia, America, China, Russia, Spain, and Mali. What could possibly be left? "Canadians versus the Swiss," replies Meier. "*That* would be a real battle."

Millions of Civilization fans would agree, eh? And the purpose of it all? As the people of Long Island knocking the blip across the oscilloscope quickly figured out, but the physicist never quite grasped, not everything in life has a purpose. ♦

Michael Ramirez

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

George Polk's Real World War II Record

The fictional career of a famous newsman

By Richard B. Frank

AUTHOR'S NOTE: This article is the product of extensive research in archives and secondary sources, as well as consultation with other historians who are specialists in naval air combat in the Pacific on both sides. Individuals like John Lundstrom, Barrett Tillman, and James Sawruk not only looked at the same official records I did but, in the case of Lundstrom and Tillman, also interviewed surviving pilots and read letters and diaries. For the sake of brevity and accessibility, this article does not attempt to discuss the sources in detail, but a much longer narrative, along with many of the key documents supporting the conclusions offered here, can be read at *www.weeklystandard.com*. There are, of course, hundreds of pages of documents that could be deemed relevant if one included all the records I and my colleagues looked at that do not mention Polk when they should have if he had done what he claimed.

George W. Polk was honored as a truth-teller. A correspondent for CBS News, he was murdered in Greece in 1948. A coveted, respected award named after him, the George Polk Award, was established in 1949 and is given every year to journalists in numerous specialties. According to a statement on the official website, the winners have exemplified the unearthing of "myriad forms of scandal and deceit." They comprise a two-generation roll call of distinguished names in journalism: Christiane Amanpour, Homer Bigart, Walter Cronkite, Thomas Friedman, David Halberstam, Seymour Hersh, Peter Jennings, Ted Koppel, Bill Moyers, Edward R. Murrow, Daniel Schorr, I.F. Stone, and many others.

Polk cut a dashing figure as a newsman, but he also cut out the real story of his World War II service as a naval officer and replaced it with a huge fraud. He deserves to join the growing roster of American journalists whose dishonesty has gravely injured their profession.

Who killed Polk remains a mystery. His body, drugged, bound, and shot in the head at close range, washed up in Salonika Bay during the Greek civil war of the late 1940s. Journalists widely believed that he died in fearless pursuit of a story. Polk *was* brave, and he wasn't reticent about his exploits. As a newsman, he often regaled his family and fellow journalists with tales of his exploits as a World War II fighter pilot and ace.

The mystery of Polk's death inspired at least three books in the United States, as well as some in Greece. In *The Polk Conspiracy*, journalist and human rights activist Kati Marton recounts how Polk told his family that he had been a fighter pilot who shot down 11 Japanese planes and earned a Purple Heart for shrapnel wounds. In *The Salonika Bay Murder: Cold War Politics and the Polk Affair*, Princeton University professor Edmund Keeley presents Polk as a Navy fighter pilot in the South Pacific, a twice-wounded recipient of a "presidential unit citation." Interestingly, Elias Vlanton and Zak Mettger's *Who Killed George Polk?* mentions only Polk's claims of flying bomber and reconnaissance missions, not the wounds or the planes shot down. Judging from the correspondence and tributes included in his personal papers, deposited at New York University Library, Polk's glorious war record helped him get—and keep—his reporter's job at CBS. When Polk's reporting in Greece was challenged, Larry LeSueur, a CBS anchorman, defended Polk as a "wartime Navy fighter pilot twice wounded over Guadalcanal." After Polk's death in May 1948, CBS's legendary reporter Edward R. Murrow eulogized him as a hero who had "flown both fighters and bombers for the Navy during the war, was wounded in the Solomons and decorated for bravery."

None of this was true. Official documents reflect no evidence that Polk flew fighters in combat, much less that he shot down any Japanese planes. In fact, they demonstrate he was not even a qualified Navy pilot. Likewise, these records contain no evidence he was wounded, or that

Richard B. Frank, a historian of World War II, is the author of Downfall: The End of the Imperial Japanese Empire.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

his decorations support his combat flying claims. Polk's actual service was admirable, but his later stories burgeoned into a fantastic deception.

I first became curious about Polk's stories reading a review of Kati Marton's book, in a September 1991 *New York Review of Books*, which described Polk as a "fighter pilot." I had recently published a history of the Guadalcanal campaign, and I had run across Polk in my researches—not as a fighter pilot, but as a junior officer supervising aircraft servicing. The work was hazardous—Polk's unit was set up at Guadalcanal's Henderson Field, which was routinely bombed and shelled by the Japanese. But it involved fueling and fixing combat aircraft, not flying them. The assertion in Marton's book that he had shot down 11 planes was patently false. That would have made him the highest-scoring ace in the U.S. Navy in 1942—a fact that would not have gone undocumented.

Off and on over the next several years, I looked into Polk's war record. I enlisted the help of several historians who specialized in World War II aviation as well as some able archivists including Gibson Smith, the preeminent expert on the records of the Bureau of Aeronautics. We found that the Navy gave Polk a direct commission as an ensign in the naval reserve in February 1942 at the age of 29. According to Polk's personnel records, he never took any Navy flight training. After Pearl Harbor, the Navy awarded its coveted "wings" only to men who successfully completed an arduous, nearly year-long process. Polk's specialty classification was "A-V(S)," Aviation Volunteer Specialist. The category, borrowed from the British, was created to fill the need for ground officers assigned to aviation units to provide administration and support functions—exactly Polk's role with his unit at Guadalcanal, known as "Cub-1."

I wrote to George Polk's surviving brother, William. He responded, insisting that George had indeed been a decorated fighter pilot. By way of proof, he transcribed two documents. One was a January 1945 letter from the Navy Department's Bureau of Aeronautics to George Polk. The letter officially credited Polk with shooting down a "Val" dive bomber on September 28, 1942, while flying with a "Marine fighter squadron," and the destruction of another "Val" on October 14 while "operating with a Marine dive bomber squadron." The letter further credited Polk with the probable destruction of a "Zero" on December 14, while operating with an "air rescue-night flying squadron." The other document is the citation for a Purple Heart awarded to Polk by a Marine general either on September 23, 1942, or for events occurring on that date; the text is not clear.

At the National Archives, an expert archivist examined the transcription of the purported letter from the Bureau of Aeronautics. He immediately demonstrated to me that the distinctive filing designator on the document (a form of bureaucratic DNA) was patently fictitious. Further, another renowned expert on Navy and Marine "victory claims" pointed out that in the many thousands of documents he had reviewed, he could not recall one that failed to identify the claimant's specific unit, not some generic "Marine fighter squadron." American records for September 28 and October 14, 1942, contain no mention of George Polk. The Japanese records of aerial combat on those dates show no "Vals" anywhere near Guadalcanal.

The Purple Heart Medal citation purports to relate to injuries received while Polk was attempting to take off in an aircraft during a Japanese bombing attack. But the date of the incident falls within a two-week interval when there was no Japanese bombing attack on Guadalcanal. Moreover, the Navy Department did not authorize awards of the Purple Heart Medal until December 1942. The purported citation reads like a valor award, whereas a valid Purple Heart citation simply lists the individual's name, rank, unit, and the date and place of injury. Whether you were performing mundane or heroic service at the time of the injury is irrelevant. Plus, the "citation" misspells the name of "Major General A.A. Vandergrift, USMC." (The correct spelling is Vandegrift, without the extra "r." Of course, it is possible that this common misspelling was introduced by William Polk in transcribing the document.)

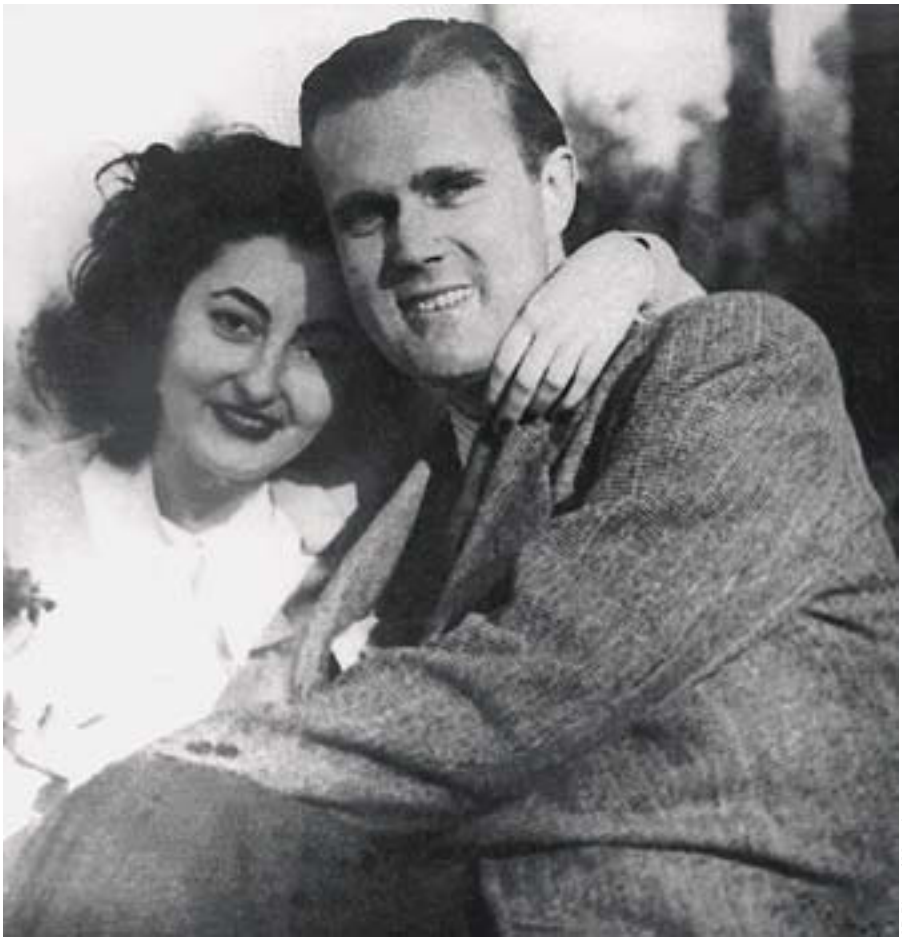
For those who find these arcane details incomprehensible or unconvincing, there is a simple and utterly compelling pointer to the truth: George Polk. The 20-plus page transcript of a talk Polk delivered at the Bureau of Aeronautics in August 1943 about his experiences at Guadalcanal and Tulagi contains no reference to any combat flights as a fighter or bomber pilot. But what completely devastates Polk's later stories of aerial combat feats and the purported documentary support is a statement he gave to a naval oral history program on February 2, 1944. There he flatly declared of his duties on Guadalcanal: "I was not flying at this time because my job was aviation engineering officer of Henderson Field." If he was not flying from Guadalcanal, he could not possibly have flown combat missions in a fighter or a bomber—or been wounded while trying to take off in an aircraft.

But Polk's two statements do reveal an interesting twist to his story, which may be the key to understanding him. He reported a transfer from Guadalcanal to Tulagi, an island 25 miles north of Guadalcanal too small for an airstrip. There Polk supervised a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

refueling base for seaplanes. He also recounted that he flew Curtis SOCs while he was at Tulagi. The Curtis SOC was a light, small, biplane float aircraft, incapable of aerial combat.

Polk had a private pilot's license, and he used his basic flying skills to persuade the commander of a unit of SOCs to allow him to fly. The commander, Capt. Edward L. Pierce, USN (Ret.), described Polk's experiences in the April 1990 issue of *Shipmate* magazine. On December 15, 1942, Polk took off in an SOC in response to a call about a downed pilot. Polk failed to return. On December 21, a search plane found Polk, who claimed that he had had a run-in with two Japanese float planes. According to Polk, the Japanese planes shot holes in the float of his SOC and forced him to evade in clouds in a rain squall. He became lost and eventually made a forced landing that destroyed the SOC.



AP Photo / Megaloeconomou

A 1948 photo of CBS correspondent George Polk and his wife Rea shortly before his murder

There are two gaping holes in Polk's story. A review of the records of the eight Japanese units equipped with float planes in the Solomon Islands in December 1942 shows no contact with U.S. aircraft on December 15 (and no lost Japanese aircraft). On top of this, a photograph in the Navy's public relations files retired to the National Archives shows Polk with the Solomon Islander who helped him after he was forced down. The caption for the photograph states that Polk was "forced down on a mission by lack of fuel," with no mention of an encounter with Japanese aircraft. Thus, it is far more likely that Polk simply got lost and eventually set down his aircraft beside a nearby island when he ran out of fuel. When Polk contemplated the potentially dire consequences of losing the SOC and the revelation that he was not really a Navy pilot (which Pierce soon discovered), Polk concocted the mitigating tale of enemy contact. As his February 1944 Navy interviewer noted, Polk was a gifted raconteur. One may surmise that when Polk lied his way out of this episode, he gleaned the insight that fanciful tales could sell as long as he was careful about his story and his audience. By the time he was discharged from the Navy in June 1944, he had become an impostor.

There is, in Polk's personal papers given to NYU, a November 30, 1943, U.S. Navy press release. It identifies Polk as one of 15 "naval aviators" decorated that day with the Presidential Unit Citation for their service on Guadalcanal. (Everyone who served with or under the First Marine Division on Guadalcanal earned this award.) An accompanying article on this ceremony clipped from the *New York Herald Tribune* for December 1, 1943, shows a photograph of Polk in a dress blue uniform. Resplendent above his left breast pocket are the golden wings authorized only for a qualified naval aviator. Just 16 days before, however, in a letter to the judge advocate general of the Navy, Polk had identified himself by his A-V(S) designator—not as an A-V(N) or A-V(G), the designators for qualified naval aviators. Polk clearly acquired some golden wings, attached them to his uniform, and had himself photographed. He then gulled the *Herald Tribune*, his former employer, into printing the story and the photograph.

This photograph and Polk's own letter are the single most damning pieces of evidence in this matter, for they demonstrate beyond dispute that Polk committed a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

deliberate fraud. In his letter to the judge advocate general that November, Polk stated that he probably would be retired from the service because of "physical disabilities incurred in combat duties." But in his February 1944 statement to the Navy oral history program, he makes no mention of any injury. In a March 1944 letter to his brother, he describes his principal problem as fatigue.

Polk apparently embellished his achievements over time, until he had become a twice-wounded "ace." It is perhaps surprising that he did not also award himself the Navy Cross, the minimal recognition for any fighter pilot who shot down 11 planes, which brings us to a further important point.

Polk's tales were not simply a slight enhancement of what he really contributed. If there were a ranking of the 15 million Americans who served in the armed forces in World War II by order of meritorious contribution, Polk would have earned a place well above the median by virtue of what he actually did. But his claim of flying fighters at Guadalcanal and shooting down numerous Japanese aircraft would have placed him in the 99.99th percentile, in the company of the most exceptional heroes, just a small step below the 400-plus men who earned the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest award for heroism. Those who served on Guadalcanal, as Polk did, sustained a fatality rate of about 1 in 30. About 1 in 3 of the men who flew as Navy fighter pilots in 1942 were killed, a rate 10 times greater than the hazard Polk faced. The difference between these fatality ratios indicates the gulf separating Polk's actual performance from what he fraudulently claimed.

Did Polk also make up stories as a newsman? Shortly before he died, Polk reported to a trusted friend and his wife that he had received an unsolicited letter from an anonymous American employee of the Chase Bank in New York. The letter allegedly alerted Polk that the Greek foreign minister, Constantine Tsaldaris, had just violated a Greek law against moving funds out of the country by depositing $25,000 in a Chase account. Polk reportedly further related a few days before his murder that he had confronted Tsaldaris and threatened to ruin the Greek with this explosive story. In her book, *The Polk Conspiracy*, Kati Marton presents this as the crystallizing event leading to Polk's assassination. After Polk was killed, however, no trace of the letter or confirmation of the account it supposedly contained was located. More tellingly, the anonymous whistleblower, safely in New York, was never heard from again. Knowing what we know now about Polk's made-up military record and forged documents, who could feel confident that this "anonymous source" ever existed?

It is not just Polk's fabrication of a false account of his naval service that undermines his credibility as a journalist; it is also the quality of the acts he committed to further this fraud. He did not merely spin a few verbal yarns about his exploits: He paraded around wearing the wings of a Navy pilot when he knew he was not one, and he forged documents to support his deceits. Those who think his inventions about his naval service do not and should not cast any shadow over his journalism should ask themselves this: Would an editor, knowing that an applicant for a job as a journalist had perpetrated the frauds Polk did, hire the individual in the belief that his past behavior raised no doubts about his future performance as a reporter?

In recent years, American journalism has been rocked by a series of scandals. Among the most significant were those relating to Jayson Blair of the *New York Times*, Jack Kelly of *USA Today*, and Dan Rather and Mary Mapes of CBS. The George Polk scandal deserves to be ranked with these others. Polk's actual misconduct may be comparable to that seen in these scandals. But at least in the first two recent cases, it was journalists themselves who exposed the frauds, and in all three the fraud tainted only one media outlet. Polk's contemporaries, by anointing him as the personification of what a journalist should be, have managed to stain the entire profession.

And there's more. Some three years ago I started trying to publish the real story of George Polk. I believed that if the evidence were placed before a fair sampling of prominent outlets of American journalism, one or more of them would be interested in publishing an article and thus would vindicate the oft-repeated claim that the mission of journalism is the fearless pursuit of truth. This story has now been offered to the *New Yorker*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, the *Washington Post*, the *New Republic*, *Harper's*, *Slate*, the *Wilson Quarterly*, and the *American Scholar*. The first three declined to publish it; the others did not respond.

This indifference to getting at the truth in the Polk matter causes one to wonder: Would these publications have turned down the opportunity to expose a comparable historical scandal involving some other profession—business, say, or banking? Or was the decision to look the other way in this instance a self-protective choice, one that tarnishes the competence and integrity of journalism as a whole?

Journalism that exposes "myriad forms of scandal and deceit" deserves to be honored. So do reporters who take risks seeking the truth. But to honor them in the name of George Polk is a travesty. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Battle Royal

France girds for the Sarko-Ségo showdown

By Michel Gurfinkiel

Paris

Good news. This spring, the French elections—both presidential, in late April and early May, and parliamentary, in early June—are going to be well worth watching. For the first time in decades, there are comparatively young presidential candidates, and quite independent-minded ones. The main conservative candidate is Nicolas "Sarko" Sarkozy, 52, who achieved a reputation for toughness as minister of the interior and wrested the UMP (Union pour un Mouvement Populaire) party from Jacques Chirac's men three years ago. On the left, Ségolène "Ségo" Royal, 53, governor of the Poitou-Charentes province in western France, also a contrarian in many respects, stormed the Socialist party last year in a breathtaking media coup. As for those people in the middle—the ones who, had they been American, would have voted for Reagan in the 1980s and Clinton in the 1990s—they have their own darling, François Bayrou, 55, leader of the centrist UDF (Union pour la démocratie française) party. For years, Bayrou insisted the French should have more than just two options—and looked like a crank. This time, he is taken more seriously.

Further good news: The far right agitator Jean-Marie Le Pen may not run, for the first time since 1974. In order to be a candidate for the French presidency, one needs to be endorsed by 500 elected officials. Until 2002, Le Pen had no problem achieving that. It is no secret that the Socialists had a vested interest in his running, as a man who would abscond with part of the conservative vote. This time, new regulations requiring that the endorsers' names be made public may doom his candidacy. In addition, the left's pro-Le Pen strategy backfired in 2002: On the first ballot, he won more votes than the Socialist candidate, Lionel Jospin, thus barring Jospin from the runoff against Chirac. It was a bitter pill and has not been forgotten.

The mechanics of French politics are such that once a new president is elected, his party is almost guaranteed to win the ensuing parliamentary ballot. More important, the president-elect can see to it that most of his party's parliamentary candidates are loyalists. In other words, Sarkozy, if elected, can count on the backing of a strong "Sarkozyist" majority at the National Assembly, and Royal, if elected, on a strong "Royalist" majority. All in all, the "dear old country" (as General de Gaulle used to call it) stands a reasonable chance, whoever wins, of rejuvenating itself a bit.

Nicolas Sarkozy entered politics early and rose quickly to the top. A lawyer by training (and not, like most others in France's political class, a graduate of the elitist ENA, the National School for Public Administration), he was elected mayor of Neuilly, the posh suburb of Paris, at the age of 28. He became a member of the National Assembly at 33, a member of the cabinet, as minister of budget, at 38, and finally, at 44, head of Jacques Chirac's Gaullist party. The key moment in his rise came in 2002, when he was appointed minister of the interior in Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin's government, at the age of 47. Overnight, he became the proponent of something entirely new in French politics—a no-nonsense conservatism in the manner of Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan, and Rudolph Giuliani.

Under the Gaullist and post-Gaullist dispensation, down through Jacques Chirac, even the conservatives pretend to be (and are somewhat) liberal, as long as they are allowed to run the show. This is the ethos of managerialism with which the majority of them are indoctrinated at the ENA. Sarkozy took precisely the opposite line. Whether on crime, the economy, anti-Semitism, or the so-called clash of civilizations, he decided that conservatives should be conservative, and act accordingly. As minister of the interior, he has stood for law and order, even if it meant a high profile for police forces in the street, holding minors in custody, deporting illegal aliens, or facing ethnic riots in the suburbs. As minister of finance in 2004, and then as party leader, he supported tax cuts. As a candidate for the presidency, he has made clear that he sees France as a Judeo-Christian country, with organic links to the rest of the Judeo-Christian world, decidedly including the United States and Israel. To this day, even some of his closest aides are uneasy with his deep affection for America and the American people. But many conservative voters, especially those who were never fully on board the Gaullist and post-Gaullist bandwagon, are thrilled.

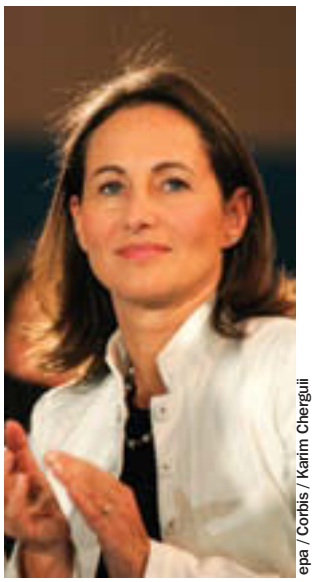
Michel Gurfinkiel is executive chairman of the Jean Jacques Rousseau Institute in Paris.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

On January 14, when he was formally nominated as the candidate of the UMP, Sarkozy delivered an inspiring speech almost 90 minutes long that recalled Irving Kristol's formulation that a neoconservative is a liberal who has been "mugged by reality." Sarkozy explained that his politics were the result of what he "had learned." "I have changed," he said, "because one undergoes a deep moral change in front of devastated parents whose daughter was burned alive" in a criminal assault. "I have changed, because nobody can countenance the despair of a husband whose wife was killed by a convicted murderer." He continued: "I changed when I visited Yad Vashem," Israel's Holocaust Memorial, and entered "a large room with thousands of little lights" dedicated to "children of 2, 4, or 5, whose names were being whispered softly. . . . And when I read the last testament of the monks of Tibhirine," seven French Trappists who were kidnapped from their Algerian monastery and beheaded by Muslim fanatics in 1996.

There was maybe something else, more personal, to Sarkozy's insistence that he had "learned" from life. Nicolas Paul Stéphane Sarközy de Nagy-Bocsa—his name at birth—does not at all fit the classic biographical mold of would-be French presidents. A divorcé, he is married to another divorcée, Cécilia Ciganer-Albeniz. There was a serious crisis between them in 2005, when Cécilia was rumored to have left him for a New York adman. Sarkozy decided not to cover up the story but rather to admit that, like many French men and women, he was neither a saint nor a hero when it came to his private life. So far, it seems to be working with the public.

Then there is the ethnic issue. Sarkozy belongs to what sociologists call the "Neo-French"—shorthand for immigrants and the children and grandchildren of immigrants. His Catholic father was born in prewar Hungary, fled from the Red Army to Nazi Germany—of all places—in 1944, served in the French Foreign Legion for three years, and finally moved to the United States. His mother was born into a Jewish-Salonikan family that converted to Catholicism. After his father left the family when Sarkozy was four years old, he was raised in France by his mother's father, the Salonika-born Benedict Mallah. Cécilia's background is similar, half East European Jewish, half Spanish Catholic.


epa / Corbis / Karim Cherguii

Kipa / Corbis / Jean-Paul Guilloteau

Ségolène Royal and her first political patron, Francois Mitterrand

Until quite recently, it was assumed that a man with such a pedigree could not compete with blue-eyed Gauls for the presidency of France. As late as 1995, Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, who was born in Smyrna—now Izmir—in Turkey, was bending over backwards to hide the fact that his family was more Levantine and Armenian than French. Again, Sarkozy decided to play it straight and turn a liability into an asset. He now emphasizes that he is as neo-French as any immigrant from North Africa, black Africa, or the Far East, and that this enables him to oppose illegal immigration or any breach of the law by legal immigrants or their offspring. And again, this seems to be working.

Ségolène Royal's journey has been very different from Sarkozy's, and yet with a few strange similarities. Unlike Sarkozy, she is an ENA graduate. And it was in that capacity that in 1982, at age 28, she joined the staff of the newly elected Socialist president, François Mitterrand, as a junior assistant. For the next seven years, she was a bit overshadowed by protective males—her companion, François Hollande, also an ENA grad and then a brilliant economics aide, and Jacques Attali, the president's chief of staff, likewise an ENA alumnus. Not to mention the president himself. Mitterrand took a strong personal interest in Royal and kept her by his side at the Élysée Palace until his reelection in 1988. He then secured her a safe National Assembly constituency in Poitou-Charentes, when she was 35, and a cabinet seat as minister of the environment before she turned 40. After he passed away, her political fortunes declined a bit: From 1997 to 2002, she was only a vice minister of education and then of the family in the successive Lionel Jospin cabinets. It looked as if her best asset was her civil partner, Hollande (with whom she has four children), who had risen to become leader of the Socialist party.

Ségolène's own turning point came in 2004, the year the Socialists swept 20 out of 22 regions in local elections. She was elected governor of Poitou-Charentes (or chairperson of the regional council, as the French have it) and, more important, was cast as the victory icon of the Socialists. She started to wear white jackets, which, combined with her last name of Royal, turned her into a sort of subliminal pre-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tender to the throne. She began to entertain far-reaching ambitions, either with or without Hollande's support. It is rumored that they now lead separate lives.

On December 15, 2005, the left-wing weekly, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, did a cover story on Ségolène, an undertaking she and her supporters undoubtedly smiled upon. The article stressed that she was a woman and thus a "different" kind of candidate, like Hillary Clinton in the United States or Angela Merkel in Germany. She was described as having been extremely close to Mitterrand. In fact, she was referred to as the heir or even "daughter" of the late president. Was this to be taken literally? Details about Mitterrand's kindness to her circulated. And people couldn't help but notice her resemblance to him. On the one hand, it seemed almost impossible that her mother, a devout Catholic and mother of eight, could have cheated on her artillery colonel father. On the other hand, her parents' marriage had collapsed quite spectacularly in the early 1970s, when she was about 20: Her father had actually kicked her mother out of the house.

At the beginning of 2006, Ségolène made her first political statement. It was about the matters she had been in charge of under Jospin: education and the family. She stood for the restoration of discipline. Men were needed in the schools to curb juvenile violence against mostly female teachers. Youngsters with criminal records were to be sent to boot camps. For about 48 hours, her colleagues in the Socialist party were indignant: Miss Royal, the colonel's daughter, was outdoing Sarkozy as a hardliner. Then the press did some polling. There was overwhelming support for her statements, even among Socialists.

This set a pattern. Ségolène started going after the sacred cows of the left. She raised doubts about the law limiting the work week to 35 hours on the crackpot theory that this creates more jobs. She said that Tony Blair was her model. While she agreed, on a Middle Eastern tour, to listen to Hezbollah officials in Lebanon, the following day in Israel she made a stunningly bold declaration about Iran: She not only characterized the mullahs' attempt to get nuclear weapons as a major danger to world peace, but expressed the view that even civilian nuclear facilities should be denied to Iran. During a visit to Beijing, she extolled the virtues of both the Chinese economy and "the swift Chinese judicial system" (based on the frequent use of the death penalty). Time and again, she would float some more left-wing views as well, like a proposal to have elected officials, including members of parliament and ministers, reviewed on a regular basis by popular juries. Still, the thrust of her campaign was, by Socialist party standards, decidedly right-wing. Some observers believe this was a clever and carefully planned operation to undercut Sarkozy's own drive to the right. Others point out that Royal's present stance is quite consistent with many of her former statements or policies as a cabinet member, especially on education and youth.

She won the Socialist party primary on November 16 with more than 60 percent of the vote, and the first nationwide polls of 2007 gave her 52 percent in the presidential race. And then, all of a sudden, things went sour. The day Sarkozy was nominated, he took the lead in the polls. Moreover, he was more popular than she among the working class (30 percent to 26 percent) and the young (35 percent to 31 percent). By February 2, he was leading her in the polls by 53 percent to 47 percent in a head-to-head race.

The apparent reason for Royal's stumbling is her mediocrity as a debater. Throughout 2006, she made few unscripted public appearances. With the actual campaign underway, she has had to talk a lot. First, she let loose with a catalogue of linguistic oddities, coining strange new words like *bravitude* (instead of *bravoure*, the correct French word for bravery) and strange new expressions like *la France respirante* ("the France of the breathing," apparently either the common people or grassroots activists). Then, she went beyond being merely provocative, and started to sound like a crank: Visiting Canada, she said she supported "sovereignty for Quebec," a gross interference in a foreign nation's democratic life unhappily reminiscent of De Gaulle's *Vive le Québec libre!* of 1967. And she made embarrassing factual blunders: One journalist asked her about the French strategic submarine force on a radio program, and she simply didn't know their actual number—she said there was only one such submarine, when in fact there are four.

It's not clear whether Royal's slide will accelerate or can still be arrested. She is mounting as many counter-attacks as she can. The Socialist party is charging Sarkozy with interfering, as minister of interior, in the electoral process and has called for his resignation from the cabinet. It brands those journalists or humorists who take note of Ségolène's blunders as "UMP activists." Royal herself is attempting to appear more down to earth. She has forsaken her white outfits for working-class black leather jackets. Politics, however, is a cruel game. As long as she was poised to win, every left-winger or liberal in the country was ready to rally around her, in spite of her surprising rightist undertones. Now that she is seen as a potential loser, support may dwindle, even if she recasts herself as a radical of the left.

The fact is that both Sarkozy and Royal were selected because of their conservative appeal. It tells a lot about the present state of mind of the French. And it is perhaps a good omen for the future of Europe. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bach to the Future

Why Johann Sebastian appeals to moderns

BY GEORGE B. STAUFFER

Bettmann / Corbis

It was the biologist and popular author Lewis Thomas, writing in *Lives of a Cell*, who proposed that mankind use Bach's music to say hello to any sentient life in the universe. Thomas recommended beaming Bach—*all* of Bach—into outer space, over and over again, so that if by chance another civilization were to tune in, mankind would have put the best possible face on the encounter.

If extraterrestrials do indeed respond, let's hope they stick to the music and don't ask about Bach's life, for although we can reconstruct the professional stations and main events of the great contrapuntist's career, we know painfully little about the day-to-day doings and inner thoughts of the man who wrote the "St. Matthew Passion," the B-Minor Mass, and other monuments of Western music.

George B. Stauffer, dean of the Mason Gross School of the Arts and professor of music at Rutgers, is the author of the forthcoming Why Bach Matters.

The extraterrestrials would surely be shocked at our ignorance.

The biographical gaps stem partly from the age—composers were still viewed as craftsmen rather than artists during the Baroque era—and partly from a man who was so preoccupied with writing music (more than a thousand works!), with teaching (more than 80 students!), and with procreating (20 children!) that he had little time for daily correspondence or personal reflection. Documents revealing Bach's nature and personality are few and far between. We have no idea how tall he was, or how large his hands. We suspect he ate well, to judge from the robust figure that looks out from the famous Haussmann painting (the only extant portrait) completed a few years before his death.

Johann Sebastian Bach
Life and Work
by Martin Geck
Translated by John Hargraves
Harcourt, 752 pp., $40

J.S. Bach
A Life in Music
by Peter Williams
Cambridge, 418 pp., $35

We can be sure from complaints recorded by church and town councils that Bach was willful, and we know he had a rich sense of humor, once saying that a non-musical "*Rec*-tor" had a "*Dreck*-ohr," or filthy ear—a remark so irreverent that its meaning was noted in French when the comment was recounted later in a German publication. But how Bach ran rehearsals, or what hours of the day he used for composing, or when he met his first wife, Maria Barbara Bach (a cousin)—we know nothing.

For Mozart and Beethoven, there are volumes of letters and contemporary reports to tell us about the inner man. Mozart wrote of going out for large ice at the Palais Royal and then saying the Rosary after a surprisingly successful performance of his "Paris" Symphony. Beethoven described for

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

posterity his inner torment at the prospect of impending deafness before penning the "Eroica" Symphony. With both composers, richly written biographies, created from early sources, have shed revealing light on their works. In the case of Bach the opposite is true: The works are the most critical surviving document, and they must be used to flesh-in the life.

This has led to highly interpretative studies of Bach in the past, accounts in which the biographers sometimes recreate their own image in the biographee. Johann Nikolaus Forkel, Bach's first biographer and an early advocate of German independence and unity, portrayed the composer in 1802 as a Teutonic national hero. Philipp Spitta, a theologian writing 70 years later, presented Bach as the "Fifth Evangelist," spreading the word of God in his cantatas, passions, and oratorios. With Albert Schweitzer, a musician greatly enamored of Wagner's operas, Bach became a "poet-musician." And most recently Christoph Wolff, university professor at Harvard, has portrayed Bach as a "learned musician," a composer whose intellectual prowess would seem to have made him a strong candidate for employment at, well, Harvard. (The university was open for business at the time but passed up the opportunity.)

So it is with some trepidation that one picks up the two latest entries in the world of Bach biography, a long volume by Martin Geck, professor of musicology at the University of Dortmund, and a shorter profile by Peter Williams, emeritus professor of music at Duke. Geck candidly points out the pitfalls at the start of his book, acknowledging the "Grand Old Men of Bach Biography" before surveying the life, works, and special issues (such as number symbolism in the music) in a highly readable 752-page overview. Geck has no axes to grind. Rather, he reconstructs Bach to the fullest extent possible while never losing sight of the music and the magical paradox of its parochial origins and its universal appeal. The book is a pleasure to read.

The Williams volume is not. Although half the length of the Geck, its tedious text makes it seem twice as long. Williams uses the famous 1754 obituary of Bach as the framework for discussion, moving through the composer's life step by step, using phrases from the necrology as chapter epigraphs. This ought to lead to a neatly structured, easily digestible account. But the author gets bogged down in endless speculation, posing literally hundreds of unanswered (and often unanswerable) questions. Bach biography involves enough head-scratching. Why create more? One wishes that John Hargraves, the skillful translator of Geck's German, had worked over Williams's text as well.

That said, both accounts agree that Bach's career displayed a steady if not meteoric climb up the ladder of opportunities available to an ambitious professional musician working in Central Germany. After a childhood marked by the early death of his parents, tutelage by an older brother, and study at a choir school in North Germany, Bach began as a provincial church organist in Arnstadt before moving through a series of increasingly better positions: Church organist in Mühlhausen, court organist in Weimar, court chapelmaster in Cöthen, and finally cantor and town music director in Leipzig (where he was third choice for the position, after Telemann and another candidate). All this suggests the ascent of a musician in search of a higher salary.

Yet, as Geck points out, Bach constantly balanced financial ambition with musical ambition. In Weimar, after composing a vast amount of innovative organ music, Bach sought and won an attractive urban position in Halle. Rather than taking it, he used it to up the ante in Weimar, becoming concertmaster as well as organist. This earned him a higher salary, but also the opportunity to write cantatas on a regular basis. As Williams notes, the Weimar years end with Bach vanquishing by default the Parisian virtuoso Louis Marchand (Marchand left town rather than enter into an improvisation duel with Bach), playing in front of an aristocratic audience in a private home in Dresden instead of before a church committee in a country chapel.

In Leipzig, Bach arrived as the new cantor of the St. Thomas School in 1723 and immediately began to compose cantatas at a furious rate, writing approximately one a week for five years or so and adding incidental pieces such as the "Magnificat," "St. John Passion," and "St. Matthew Passion" for good measure. But after six years, with a supply of 300 works under his belt, he stopped composing cantatas almost completely and took the unprecedented move of directing the university collegium musicum, a rather motley student ensemble that performed weekly in a local coffee house. While ostensibly a step down, the switch allowed Bach to write harpsichord concertos, gamba sonatas, and other innovative instrumental works at the same weekly pace as the earlier cantata production.

Finally, in the last decade of his life, Bach retreated from both church and collegium, focusing instead on private projects—the "Goldberg Variations," the "Art of Fugue," the "Musical Offering," and the B-Minor Mass. As Geck points out, the B-Minor Mass, in particular, gave Bach the opportunity to survey the full range of available compositional styles, from Renaissance motets to Baroque dances to Pre-Classical choruses. To an extraordinary degree, Bach seized control of his professional life in a way that allowed him to compose as he wished. This was quite unusual at the time.

Casual listeners sometimes complain that much of Bach's music sounds the same. In point of fact, some of it *is* the same, since Bach in his later years became a strong proponent of recycling earlier works, revising the music and texts to make the pieces appropriate for different occasions. In the early Leipzig years this was a necessity, since as cantor he was compelled to come up with a new cantata every Sunday. Later Bach continued to recycle, even when he was not working under time constraints. Apparently he relished the opportunity to revamp existing scores, since it allowed him to bring the music to an even higher state of perfection.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

As Geck and Williams rightly observe, the "St. Mark Passion" (now lost), the "Christmas Oratorio," the harpsichord concertos, Book II of the "Well-Tempered Clavier," and the Mass in B Minor consist almost wholly of reworkings, or "parodies," as they were termed by contemporary writers. This approach, together with Bach's obsessive desire for improvement, made composition an ongoing process. The multitude of variant readings for Book II of the "Well-Tempered Clavier" suggests that Bach never achieved a definitive version of the work.

Geck calls the B-Minor Mass, compiled at the very end of Bach's life, a final "bouquet of parodies," in which the composer refashioned his favorite cantata movements with German librettos of local interest into a new work with a more universal Latin text. The B-Minor Mass (never so labeled by Bach) was described as "The Great Catholic Mass" by Bach's descendants. Geck believes the composer was striving to create a catholic piece in the broadest sense of the word, a work capable of eliminating the borders not just between Protestant and Catholic faiths but, ultimately, between the sacred and the secular. The presence of so much dance music in the Mass points in that direction.

Bettmann / Corbis

St. Thomas Church, Leipzig

The B-Minor Mass does not seem to have been performed during Bach's lifetime, but when it was revived in the 19th century, it was presented as a humanistic "concert" Mass and paired with Beethoven's *Missa solemnis*. Today it is performed in concert halls as frequently as in churches.

Geck and Williams reconstruct the life of Bach as viewed through his music, and they do a commendable job, presenting safe, serviceable accounts in a straightforward way (despite the dialectical detours in the Williams book). Yet one finishes them wishing for a bolder, more imaginative reading of Bach's life, one in which the biographer takes informed leaps and attempts to fill in the gaps, even at the expense of subjective interpretations. Here Christoph Wolff's denser but magisterial *Johann Sebastian Bach: The Learned Musician* (2000) meets the challenge. Wolff, too, admits that our knowledge of Bach is limited. But through clever surmise—such as assessing Bach's room-order bill in Halle to conclude that a good deal of beer, brandy, and tobacco went into the creation of a cantata—he is able to paint a fuller, fleshier portrait of the father of counterpoint than any other account.

In the end, there is also the question of precisely what it is about Bach's works that make them so appealing to modern audiences. Why is it that Bach's music remains so important today—that it continues to offer joy, solace, challenge, and assurance to general listeners as well as professionals, on a global basis? Bach has become a cultural icon, and his works have achieved a universality that transcends the borders of Germany and Europe, which makes us want to beam his compositions into space to affirm the positive spirit of mankind.

How do we explain this phenomenon? If we can't answer all the unknowns about Bach's personal life and inner being, then perhaps we ought to address this issue, just in case the extraterrestrials drawn to earth by the composer's music ask about it. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Unthinkable Thoughts

A strategist asks, Where is technology leading us?

BY ERIC COHEN

Fear and trembling about the dark side of modern technology have been with us for centuries—from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* to Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* to J. Robert Oppenheimer's atomic remorse.

Technology is power, and power is dangerous. The arts of biology that allow us to conquer disease also allow us to manufacture deadly plagues and engage in eugenics. The mastery of nature's elements that makes modern life possible also leaves modern civilization imperiled. Without technology, man is impotent, and only a fool would romanticize the age when mothers and children died regularly in childbirth, when keeping warm and staying fed were life's central struggles, and when sending an email required actually sitting at a computer. Yet it is also hard to imagine how man's technological story can end well, at least in those temples of advanced civilization like London and New York that are also the most obvious targets for high-tech attacks.

Columbia University Press

Annihilation from Within
The Ultimate Threat to Nations
by Fred Charles Iklé
Columbia, 142 pp., $24.50

Fred Iklé's new book is a sobering exploration of the perils of progress. "The history of the human race is a saga with many sad endings," he writes. "But new Great Destroyers are now arriving on stage—the spread of mass destruction weapons beyond national control, and technologies that can invade the sanctuary of the human mind."

Like a Greek tragedy in the making, technology has a relentless logic we cannot easily stop. And the more it shatters our hope in history's forward direction, the more fertile the ground for otherworldly fundamentalisms that worship death as an answer to life, and that employ modern weapons to destroy modern civilization.

To describe the origins of our technological predicament, Iklé adopts a fairly simple framework, what he calls "mankind's cultural split." Some 250 years ago, modern science broke off from religion and politics; the desire to explore and master nature's workings became an autonomous enterprise, ungoverned and ungovernable by the social orders in which science itself flourished.

This great divide served many legitimate human purposes: Once helpless in the face of nature's malignancies, technological man asserted himself with vaccines and electricity and the marvels of modern engineering.

Yet mankind's cultural split also had ominous consequences. Men's loyalties were divided between the restraining traditions of the religious past that gave life meaning and the liberating powers of progress that made life better. Even worse, the "ceaseless momentum of science" took on a life of its own. In trying to master nature to relieve man's estate, modern science also arms wicked men with nature's power. Meanwhile, our success at technological self-improvement tempts us to believe that genetic engineering, embryo research, and memory-altering drugs can perfect human life by human will. The science that liberates is also the science that dehumanizes and destroys.

While generally correct and useful enough, Iklé's neat framework oversimplifies the complex relationship between science, religion, and politics. Science emerged, in part, to answer the very fear of death that has long turned men to God. And science now serves, or might serve, the radical theology of radical Islam, by providing the means for destroying the West and ushering in the golden age of the Muslim God.

Moreover, as a historical matter, Iklé never explains what happened 250 years ago and why; the severing of modern science from both religion and philosophy actually goes back to Bacon and Descartes in the early 1600s. Their masterworks, like the *New Atlantis* (1626) and *Discourse on Method* (1637), are the key to understanding the origins, spirit, and tragedy of modern technology. Yet Iklé never even mentions them.

The focus of the book, however, is not theoretical but practical; not backward-looking to the origins of modern science but forward-looking to life in a world transformed by the dark side of modern technology. According to Iklé, the veteran nuclear strategist who served as the number two to Caspar Weinberger, "annihilation from within" threatens man from two directions, recalling Robert Frost's macabre poem about whether we should prefer the world to end in fire or in ice.

The first threat is the perversion of human life *via* biotechnology—by merging our minds with machines in the quest for "super-intelligence" and by extending the human lifespan in a way that destroys the soul-shaping rhythms of the human life cycle. The

Eric Cohen is editor at large of the New Atlantis.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

second threat is a nuclear or biological attack that turns liberal democracies into tyrannies, and shatters modernity forever with the permanent specter of mass death.

It is this latter threat that largely preoccupies Iklé, and he lays out, in detail, how such a nuclear takeover might happen: A home-grown cult akin to Japan's Aum Shinrikyo could manufacture a nuclear bomb, destroy a nation's capital, and capitalize on the chaos to take power. While we are all rightly worried about radical Islam, says Iklé, this is not our only, or even our most dangerous, enemy.

Iklé's book is elegantly written, and one ought to admire his sober willingness to confront the dark side of progress without false hope or debilitating despair. He alternates skillfully between the tragedian describing what cannot be stopped and the policy analyst counseling those actions that might prevent total annihilation—including a Manhattan-style project to develop sensors that detect nuclear bombs, better laws to ensure the continuity of the U.S. government after a nuclear attack, and a revamped strategy for mobilizing the industrial sector during a national emergency.

The book ends with a poetic homage to America, written as if by a living witness to a nation under siege, with millions dead and whole cities already burned to the ground, appealing again to the "mystic chords of memory" that alone might sustain us on the precipice between survival and oblivion.

But the book also rings many false notes, rooted in the analyst's temptation to make his own particular realms of expertise seem like the most important ones. For example, Iklé downplays threats from Iran and North Korea, believing the greatest danger to America and other democracies are local anarchists who may steal or make weapons of mass destruction. Yet he offers little compelling analysis of who these resident bandits might be, and what ideology might move them to annihilate America from within (short of a throwaway line about the mortal dangers posed by alienated Hispanic immigrants).

And when it comes to the dangers of man's merger with machines, it is hard to tell just what worries Iklé: the inherent dehumanization of becoming a cyborg, or the fear that our unscrupulous enemies will become cyborgs before we do. Indeed, he seems to believe that such hybrid super-intelligent beings would give any nation that possessed them (or became them) a strategic advantage. Think China ruled by a transhumanist think tank.

Needless to say, this seems not only unlikely, given the primitive state of brain-machine science, but also inherently wrong: Neither the cleverness and ruthlessness required to become a dictator, nor the prudence and courage required to be a great statesman, seem improvable by merging with a computer.

But in the end, Iklé's book is a much-needed invitation to reflection about the tragedy of technology—how the powers we have made may come back to destroy us, how the quest for self-improvement may only lead to self-degradation, and how the need to defend ourselves against ruthless enemies may require that we become so ruthless ourselves that eternity can only judge us harshly for doing what is necessary.

In the age of stem cells and suicide bombers, hybrid cars and hydrogen bombs, we live on the precipice between perfection and destruction, expecting endless life and imminent disaster simultaneously. Staying sane in such an age—politically, morally, and humanly—is no easy task. Which explains why the pacifying drug "soma" seemed so appealing to the denizens of Huxley's brave new world: "What's the point of truth or beauty or knowledge when the anthrax bombs are popping all around you? . . . People were ready to have their appetites controlled then. Anything for a quiet life." ♦

Ike's Second Army

Whatever happened to the Eisenhower Republicans?

BY STEPHEN HESS

A decent neighborhood in heaven should be reserved for those who write biographies of history's spear carriers, those men and women who lead useful public lives at the margins of national attention.

Modern Republican
Arthur Larson and the Eisenhower Years
by David L. Stebenne
Indiana, 363 pp., $35

Arthur Larson, the subject of Ohio State historian David L. Stebenne's meticulous rendering, had one shining moment on the national political scene. Larson was a law professor and expert in workers' compensation who, in his spare time, while serving as undersecretary of labor in the Eisenhower administration, wrote a slender book called *A Republican Looks at His Party* (1956), in which he declared that Dwight Eisenhower had "discovered and established the Authentic American Center in politics." The manuscript was vetted by the White House staff and enthusiastically endorsed by the president during a news conference, whereupon, with the aid of Henry Luce's publications, it became a surprising bestseller.

What happened next was that a smitten president decided Larson

Stephen Hess, distinguished research professor of media and public affairs at George Washington University, is the author, most recently, of Through Their Eyes: Foreign Correspondents in the United States.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bettmann/Corbis

The Eisenhowers in Hastings, Nebraska, July 5, 1952

should be a future Republican leader. He promptly elevated him to the directorship of the United States Information Agency, but Larson's ineptness in dealing with a Democratic Congress resulted in the budget being drastically cut. Eisenhower then rescued the miscast scholar with an appointment as presidential speechwriter, "a maddening experience" that lasted 10 months.

Despite the title, Stebenne has written a birth-to-death biography. The Eisenhower administration consumed just four-and-a-half years of Larson's life and takes less than half the book's chapters. Indeed, I thought the most interesting chapter was about his years at Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar (1932-35). Larson took leave of Washington at the end of August 1956 to direct the Rule of Law Center at Duke. He spent the rest of his life productively in Durham and died in 1993.

Several weeks after Larson left the White House, I joined President Eisenhower's staff, where I remained happily until we were forced to vacate for President-elect Kennedy's arrival at noon on January 20, 1961. Our experience—Professor Larson's and mine—raises an odd question: Why did one of the most successful Republican presidents in history—eight years that brought peace and financial solvency—leave no imprint on his party?

Dwight D. Eisenhower was a genial, shrewd, optimistic product of small-town middle America, the most popular general of a just war. His military experience gave an internationalist cast to his otherwise conservative beliefs. Harry Truman would have given him the Democratic party's presidential nomination in 1948. Instead, Ike gave the Republican party a smashing victory in 1952, reaffirmed in 1956. Irving Berlin even composed his campaign song.

But Republican Eisenhower was only casually interested in party-building. He had a deep antipathy to partisan politics, which he extended to its practitioners, particularly of the legislative variety. The president was hardly naive and was himself a skilled bureaucratic infighter. Yet in staffing his administration it was almost a litmus test that politicians were tainted. (Stebenne shows, for example, how Larson was asked his political affiliation only as an afterthought when he was invited to become the administration's number-two official at the Labor Department, and later, being a political outsider, influenced Eisenhower in giving him two essentially political jobs.)

There were three major players of national political ambition in Eisenhower's government: Harold Stassen, Nelson Rockefeller, and Richard Nixon. Stassen lost a Republican primary for governor of Pennsylvania in 1958, which ended his political career, although not his running for office. Rockefeller's political career was built on being a Rockefeller. Nixon made his own political career. I was his speechwriter when he ran for governor of California in 1962, the only Eisenhower alumnus on his staff. When he became president in 1969, only two Eisenhower people were in his cabinet: William Rogers, whose friendship predated the Eisenhower years, and Maurice Stans, his money man.

In the course of the eight Eisenhower years, there must have been several thousand political appointments: cabinet members, White House staff aides, departmental undersecretaries, assistant secretaries, and those with titles like special assistant to the undersecretary. Of the 20 people who served in the cabinet, only one subsequently ran for office: James

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mitchell, secretary of labor, defeated for governor of New Jersey. Excluding the military aides, 104 people served on the White House staff and only one subsequently ran for office: Malcolm Moos, an unsuccessful independent Senate candidate from Minnesota.

Below this level in any presidency are buried the young men and women who return to their states to build political careers. These are the ones I recall from the Eisenhower administration: William Scranton (State), John Lindsay (Justice), Fred Seaton (Interior), George Lodge and Steve Horn (Labor), Elliot Richardson (Health, Education, and Welfare). My back-of-the-envelope calculations surely overlook someone from the Third District of someplace. Still, these are pretty slim pickings from the hundreds who came to Washington to help the president govern.

This should not imply that Eisenhower's people made no further contribution to public service. Quite the contrary. There were the experts. The list might start with Arthur Burns, the president's chief economic adviser, a future Fed chairman. Some of the Eisenhower people were retained by Kennedy and subsequent presidents, such as William Macomber at State. Many Eisenhower people, I felt, came to Washington with no greater expectation than to contribute to government service as good citizens are expected to contribute to the community chest, and would continue as good citizens when they went home.

The analysis of what follows Eisenhowerism in the Republican party is most often presented in ideological or sociological terms. There was a sea change coming. Both William F. Buckley Jr. and Barry Goldwater had blistering attacks on Larson's treatise in their books. Nor did Rockefeller or Scranton have the political skill to successfully challenge for the 1964 nomination. On history's balance scale, the GOP owes more to Ike than he does to his party. But if only as a sidebar, the general left the field of battle without providing enough foot soldiers to contest the outcome. ♦

Have Book, Will Travel

The author is sold, along with the text.

BY THOMAS SWICK

Travel writers, regularly dismissed as trivialists, rarely indulge in the popular book tour whine. It's not just that we have bigger trips to fry, we have fewer bones to pick. We don't see what novelists find so objectionable about a diet of fine hotels, especially when the rooms all come reserved and generously paid for. We are puzzled by the memoirists' complaint about living out of a suitcase because to us it's infinitely preferable to living in the past. And, needless to say, we don't quite grasp the horror of going out and meeting readers. Those sensitive souls who flaunt their lack of social skills are as pathetic as people who boast that they are bad at math. A signing in Dubuque is not a journey into the heart of darkness.

The only possible trauma of a book tour is the potential encounter with apathy: The empty chairs of a ghostly chain at the short end of a mall in a town without pity. But for this, too, travel writers are much better prepared. We tend not to enter MFA programs, teach at universities, or live in New York City, so we are in constant touch with the great unread. From our hours spent in airports we know that most Americans, when presented with large chunks of free time and removed from demanding home entertainment systems, will still find almost any excuse—a cell phone, a laptop, another bag of chips—not to pick up a book. To travel is to be continually reminded of the growing homelessness of the written word.

Thomas Swick, travel editor of the South Florida Sun-Sentinel, *is the author, most recently, of* A Way to See the World: From Texas to Transylvania with a Maverick Traveler.

So, unburdened by illusions and still out of the house, travel writers are the happiest authors on tour. (Not to mention the most symmetrical.) Some may give the impression, often by their wardrobes, that they'd be much more content sharing gourds of gazelle blood with Masai tribesmen, but don't believe them. A book tour provides us with a focus, not always a given in our all-over-the-map trade. ("No one," Paul Theroux once wrote, "has ever accused me of traveling with a theme.") And the focus, in another pleasing twist, is us.

Travel writers are, by nature, in search of the other—which, by definition, is not oneself. Some memoirists manqués have wandered into the field, and appropriated place as nothing more than a scenic backdrop to the more important story of themselves. But the majority, the best (it goes without saying), project their interest outwards. It is only on a book tour that we stand front and center.

True, that position is difficult to define—not to mention enjoy—in an empty store. But all day long the evening reading gives us a sense of purpose, a handy response to Bruce Chatwin's ever-present "what am I doing here?" And if it turns out to be a wash, there's always the sympathetic staff to chat with, and pump for local color. A stood-up author still beats a doubting travel writer, especially when they're one and the same.

I know because I've played the part. When my collection of travel stories came out in paperback, I traveled to the Midwest to revisit some of the places that appear in the book. It was a self-guided tour—my publisher is small; I am even smaller—which, to the bestseller pashas, probably sounds

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

as uplifting as a solo honeymoon. But they're not travel writers flying coach with their first paperback.

The shuttle from Midway buzzed with raves for warring weekend attractions. The young woman behind me announced that she had come to see the Red Sox play, in a rare Wrigley Field appearance, while two other women talked excitedly about the Blues Festival. It was good preparation, which I wouldn't have gotten in a chauffeured limo, for the Printers Row Book Fair.

The thing about great cities is that they have enough people to go around. On Saturday afternoon, crowds of nonfrequent flyers grazed the book tents on Dearborn Street. "Everybody's carrying about 15 extra pounds right now," Carlos Cumpian, a local Chicano writer, explained to me as we sipped iced tea at a sidewalk café. "During the winter they're able to hide it under coats. Chicagoans look their best in October—after the summer, and before they've had their Halloween candy."

The evening VIP party was held in a parking lot. The unassuming locale carried a certain appeal which apparently only I appreciated, as almost no other authors attended. This was a disappointment. At the Miami Book Fair there had been a cocktail party in a downtown office tower which most of the featured authors attended. In Austin, the Texas Book Festival featured breakfast at the governor's mansion and a dinner and dance band Saturday evening. The Arkansas Literary Festival in Little Rock hosted a black-tie gala that included a postprandial game of "Name That Tome" (my team lost to Roy Blount Jr.'s). Each had seemed a kind of glittery reward for the cloistered life which every author could treat as a personal celebration.

In Chicago, for whatever reason, authors felt no need to congregate. At least not in parking lots. I searched in vain for the black-and-white Hawaiian shirt of Paul Theroux, whom I had listened to in an airless tent a few hours earlier. He had flattered his audience, comprising of about 200 people (in a city of three million), congratulating them for being readers. They were, he said, "like the early Christians, gathering in tents." He told of talking to a young woman recently, a college graduate, and mentioning a book by Robert Louis Stevenson. She had never heard of him.

"Didn't your parents read to you when you were a child?" Theroux had asked her incredulously.

It occurred to me that writers' concerns about the decline of reading stem from more than just a self-preservation instinct; they are tied, as well, to the nearly-as-powerful need to connect. You don't have to read me, but read so you can talk to me. All writers were readers first, and most continue their lives as more prolific readers than writers; with fellow readers—unlike with fellow writers—we feel a noncompetitive bond. (There are no prestigious workshops, or covetous magazine assignments, or Pulitzers for readers.) Tell a writer you write and depression sets in; tell a writer you read and gratitude blossoms. Especially now, in the Blog Age, when it seems that more people want to write than to read (not realizing that you need to read in order to write anything that is worth reading, or hasn't already been written). But this is the inevitable result when a culture prizes self-expression over learning. It is the written equivalent of a room in which everyone is talking and nobody is listening, particularly to the dead. Literature, like French, has ceased to be the *lingua franca* for the so-called educated crowd.

But this wasn't what I wished to discuss with Theroux. I wanted to ask him why he ignored my book, which my blurb-seeking publisher had sent him, after choosing one of the chapters for *The Best American Travel Writing 2001*.

I carried my plate of hummus and bruschetta and sat down at a table of secondhand booksellers. Used books were more a part of the Printers Row Book Fair than of the other fairs I'd been to. One of the sellers said there used to be even more secondhand stalls, before the chain bookstores became involved and inevitably changed the character of the fair. A woman with short brown hair and dirty fingernails told me, too, that many older, even middle-aged, secondhand booksellers (middle-aged and secondhand—a dire combination in the country of the next new thing) gave up on book fairs because of the physical labor involved. Ultimately, there is a lot of heavy lifting in literature.

On Sunday, I woke up well before my 2:30 presentation. I was scheduled to appear with a professor of Buddhism who had written a book about the religion and his experiences teaching it in Cambodia. I was ambivalent about panels, not just because the audience is doubled for your potentially one-bettered performance, but because they had produced, at previous fairs, my greatest public debacle as a writer, and my finest hour.

In Miami, I had followed the author of a book about her multicultural neighborhood in Queens. She had brought slides, recordings, and her sizable talents as an actress and mimic, recreating accents that ranged from street black to Ukrainian immigrant. It was an impressive performance, and a long one, as the coauthor, her husband, hadn't been able to make the trip and she took the time allotted to (at least) two speakers. When she finally finished, and the lights came back on, a crew appeared to dismantle her audio and visual aids. During the lull a large portion of the audience, either having seen what they'd come for or believing the session now over, got up and walked out, heartlessly passing in front of me as they went. The moderator, inexplicably at a loss, made no announcement. I watched the agonizing faces of friends who stayed to lend their support and thereby magnified my humiliation by being witnesses to it. Eventually I took the podium, and read a short section in a voice of controlled hurt.

In Austin, things worked out differently. As viewers of Book-TV know, readings at the Texas Book Festival take place in the state capitol. My panel, probably because it contained two Texans, was put in the House Chamber. The three of us looked out from our hillock over a plush plain of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

leather swivel chairs, all of them occupied by make-believe legislators. Lesser would-be officials speckled the balcony.

Once again I went last, after another dramatic reading, this one by a young Hispanic woman who used not just her voice but her body to evoke a night of rumba in Havana. After she sat down, and the other Texan read—about the founder of a sailing ship company—I pulled out a newspaper column I'd written, inspired by recent campaign speeches. (The book fair took place one week before the presidential election.)

"My fellow Americans, as your next president I will ensure that every working man and woman receives one month of vacation a year."

Applause rang through the chamber.

"I will approve discounts on Prozac for flight attendants.

"I will make any hotel with attitude host a weekly Rotary Club luncheon.

"I will convince the manufacturers of suitcases to come up with a new black.

"I will pass through Congress a bill mandating that any passengers who fail to fit their carry-on bags into the overhead compartment on the first try must turn said bags over to a flight attendant and, before landing, write letters of apology to all the people seated in rows higher than their own."

The vote in the House was clear: I had carried Texas.

In Chicago, I met the professor of Buddhism in the authors' lounge. I had envisioned a man who brought a bemused detachment to the huzza of the marketplace, so I was relieved when he seemed as concerned about sales and publicity as I was. We were taken to a small classroom where about 20 people sat. This time I read first, from my chapter on Comiskey Park, and then the professor read about Cambodia—two subjects that quite possibly had never been paired.

And probably never should be again. Afterwards, I signed three books and then looked on as the line, made up almost entirely of comely young women, grew in front of the professor's table. The majority of readers are female, of course, just as the majority of sports fans are male. (The percentage of women at a ball game is no doubt comparable to the percentage of men at a book fair.) The fact that I was in Chicago was no excuse for my choice of reading; people don't want to be transported to the homegrown. And as a meaningful way of life, Buddhism will always surpass support for the White Sox.

Zuma Press / Kelly Owen

Miami Book Fair, 2006

For ten long minutes I not only encountered apathy, I also watched its opposite turn its perfumed back to me. Panels. Then I remembered that I was a travel writer and I did what travel writers do: I left. I walked out of the book fair, picked up my rental car, and pointed it towards Iowa.

I was looking forward to my first trip to the state since 1992. That also was an election year, and as in every election year, commentators were talking about the heartland. I had never been to the heartland. I flew to Des Moines, rented a car, and discovered a miscellany of intimate Americana: the Surf Ballroom in Clear Lake, where Buddy Holly, Richie Valens, and the Big Bopper gave their last performance; the National Hobo Convention in nearby Britt; the "Field of Dreams" in Dyersville; the limestone buildings of Grant Wood's old artists' colony in Stone City—everything connected by rolling fields of tall green corn. I thought of all the people who had said "Huh?" when I had told them where I was going next. Iowa taught me a valuable lesson of travel, or at least travel writing: Often, the less glamorous the destination, the more rewarding the journey.

The sun disappeared as Copland's "Red Pony" played on the radio. Just across the Mississippi a Super 8 Motel sign pierced the gloaming. I dropped my bags in my room and headed into Le Claire. A 1923 Rolls-Royce sat in front of Sneaky Pete's.

"That's my car," said one of the two men sitting at the bar. "A Silver Ghost." He and his friend had left New Hampshire and were on their way to Montana for a little fly-fishing. In 2007, he said, they were going to ship the car to China and then drive it in the Beijing-Paris rally.

Hundreds of neckties hung from the ceiling of the dining room. "We cut them off customers," the bartender told me, before mentioning that Buffalo Bill Cody had been born in Le Claire (somehow I had missed the town on that first trip). Minutes later he brought me my buffalo burger, which I washed down with a glass jar of beer.

"Where you staying?" he asked. "Out at the Super 8? That's too bad. I've got a B&B," and he handed me a card for the Hog Heaven Bed & Breakfast. And I sat there struck (once again) by the limitless riches of the road—in 15 minutes I had found four travel stories, that of a biker B&B being almost as marvelous as that of the future Eurasian road racers—and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

also by the brute similarities between the lodging and the publishing industries. The franchises—Super 8, David Sedaris—get prominent placement along the highway and just inside the door (and with it ever-increasing business), while the little guys—the B&Bs and midlist authors (while often charming, and full of personality)—fight a losing battle tucked away on side streets and back shelves where they are invisible to all except those who specifically seek them out. That night I cut my ties with the chain motels.

In Iowa City, I found a handsome bed and breakfast in the middle of a leafy academic street. Though it was a good walk from the university, you could still imagine professors heading off in the morning to disseminate knowledge. A visiting professor of mathematics, in fact, occupied the room next to mine. In the morning we were joined at table by an innkeeping couple from Minneapolis. And in that easy familiarity of boarding house breakfasts, they asked about me. B&Bs, it was clear, give go-it-alone book tour authors not only a warm feeling of solidarity but also an excellent opportunity for self-promotion. Front and center once again. And many people, moved either by a brush with celebrity or a bout of sympathy, will buy a book if they've met the author. At least they say they will.

A sign in the upstairs café at Prairie Lights (independent booksellers get the same professional courtesy as B&Bs) informs customers that they are on the site of the old literary society, The Times Club, that brought Robert Frost, Carl Sandburg, e.e. cummings, Langston Hughes, and Sherwood Anderson to town. Black-and-white photographs of them and others decorate the walls. Downstairs, Paul Ingram talks books like the one-man literary society he is.

My reading was hosted by a local radio personality and carried live on WSUI. (As are all readings at Prairie Lights, giving them an unexpected air of import.) About 50 people filled the chairs, while a blessed handful stood in the back. Thanks be to college towns with famous writers' workshops. Ignoring the lessons of Chicago, I read about Iowa, though I ended with some helpful travel advice for runaway brides (inspired by the memory of a town that embraces drifters) and a soliloquy on the beauty of unsung places. When the hour-long program was over, a number of people came up to chat (it was me or nothing). One was a boy, no older than 14, who gave me my book to be signed and then, just as endearingly, his hand to be shaken.

The next morning I stopped in Anamosa to visit Grant Wood's grave, leaving a postcard of my book with the woman in the Chamber of Commerce office. (After verifying that I had correctly identified in it his final resting place.) That night's reading in Dubuque was turned into a signing as the space before the microphone remained dishearteningly vacant. Friendly staff made like a grounds crew and swiftly moved my table out of the café and into the center aisle.

An author at a signing is like a picture at an exhibition—passively open to public scrutiny, ridicule, approval, dismissal, avoidance. The difference being, of course, that the author perceives and registers (or, frequently, tries not to register) the reactions she inspires. But sometimes he is simply an information source for a customer looking for the latest Palahniuk.

Our culture has no accepted etiquette for dealing with writers sitting alone with their books. People bring to the experience, even in large cities, no helpful guidelines or learned behaviors. Which is why I remember with such awe and affection the young woman in Dubuque.

She walked by, trailing her husband and two children.

"So, you're an author?" she said, slowing her pace but not coming to a stop.

"Yes," I said.

"Congratulations." ♦

Warhol's Inferno

'The most neoconservative movie ever made.'

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

The new biographical film *Factory Girl* has nothing to do with Iraq or the unintended consequences of the welfare state or the place of America in the world. It's about an heiress-model-socialite-addict named Edie Sedgwick, who died of a drug overdose 35 years ago at the age of 28, having accomplished nothing. Nonetheless, *Factory Girl* is the most neoconservative movie ever made—a vision of Hell called the 1960s ruled by a devil incarnate named Andy Warhol.

Factory Girl
Directed by George Hickenlooper

This is a loud, jerky maelstrom of a movie that tries to keep its audience disoriented and off balance, as though we were naive visitors from Ohio brought to a happening at Warhol's notorious silver-painted loft in midtown Manhattan and given a glass of cheap red wine spiked with LSD. Director George Hickenlooper wants us to live through the temptation and surrender of Edie Sedgwick to Sixties debauchery as though we were Edie—a defenseless little girl without immunities of any kind exposed to a series of moral and spiritual illnesses and succumbing to every single one.

The carrier of the disease is Warhol, whose childlike affect is a clever mask

John Podhoretz, a columnist for the New York Post, *is* THE WEEKLY STANDARD*'s movie critic.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Weinstein Company

Sienna Miller as Edie Sedgwick

that allows him to manipulate, tease, enchant, torment, and control his hangers-on, New York society, and the art world. No one has ever pursued fame and fortune as nakedly as the Warhol we see in *Factory Girl*, and yet because he behaves so freakishly, the world assumes his hunger for riches and headlines is somehow an ironic commentary on them.

What happens on Warhol's watch? He mass-produces his Brillo boxes and his silk-screened portraiture. He makes deliberately awful movies, some of them pornographic (this being a time when pornography was somehow considered both liberating and hip). And he hosts a 24-hour party fueled by drugs. Edie appears in the movies, helps him sell his art, and does the drugs with crazed abandon.

Warhol, played by the Australian actor Guy Pearce as a first cousin to Hannibal Lecter, falls in love with the 21-year-old Edie—not because he wants to sleep with her (Warhol was gay), but because he has the impossible desire to transform himself into her. (In this respect, maybe he's less Hannibal Lecter and more Buffalo Bill, the serial killer in *The Silence of the Lambs* who wore the skins of his victims.) The real Edie Sedgwick was a heartbreakingly gorgeous sylph with a Mayflower pedigree and seemingly limitless financial resources, and the British actress Sienna Miller is an eerie Edie replica. And when she begins to move away from Warhol because she's fallen for Bob Dylan (here called Billy Quinn for legal reasons), he tortures her psychologically and then simply cuts her off. At which point, she spirals ever downward toward her demise.

Factory Girl doesn't blame Edie's collapse entirely on the excesses of the 1960s. It states as fact what may only have been Edie's amphetamine-driven fantasy—that she was sexually abused by her father Fuzzy—and suggests that she might have been doomed from the start like her brother Minty, who committed suicide. But those are things Edie only discusses in *Factory Girl*. We don't see them. What we see is the Warhol whirl, and it's as frenetic and bleak as a Bosch canvas.

The message here is clear: Edie Sedgwick was killed by the sybaritic decadence of the decade in which she lived, and by the steadfast refusal of the cultural world to rip the mask off the charlatanry of Warhol and his fashion-catalogue counterculture. You'd have to go back in time and sample some of the writings of another Podhoretz to find a more damning portrait of Edie Sedgwick's era.

I am not an admirer of Andy Warhol's, and I hate the 1960s as much as anyone on the right. But I have to say that *Factory Girl* stacks the deck. By all accounts, Edie Sedgwick was no ingenuous ingénue, but rather a young woman with a colossal personality who dominated every room she entered. The word George Plimpton used to describe her was "enchanting." She was memorable long after her death not because of the depth of her victimhood but because she was the sort of person who seduced others into taking care of her. There is none of this in Sienna Miller's exhausting performance. Her Edie is simply a hyperactive poor little rich girl with an evil father, and if you had a pill to give her, you'd stuff it down her mouth just to shut her up and calm her down for a minute.

As for the 1960s, they simply had to be more fun than this. Tom Wolfe called the decade a "happiness explosion," and certainly part of the appeal of Warhol's demimonde was the crazed and liberated sense that everybody mixed up with Andy was like a disobedient child getting the run of the house while the parents were away on a trip. No rational person would ever want to go to one of the parties we see in *Factory Girl*, but the problem is that for people like Edie Sedgwick and many of her close friends, they couldn't bear to spend a second away from the party. If life in chic Manhattan had been as unpleasant as director Hickenlooper and his team of screenwriters make it out to be, all of its denizens would have moved to Brooklyn in the 1960s instead of waiting until the new millennium to cross the river.

It's unfortunate that the most neoconservative movie ever made is such a drag. Our only hope now is for somebody to make a motion picture out of Irving Kristol's *Two Cheers for Capitalism*. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov, once a quiet aide to the former authoritarian president of Turkmenistan, ascended to the presidency himself on Wednesday, formally beginning a new era for a reclusive nation whose vast natural gas reserves have brought it suitors from governments around the world. Mr. Berdymukhammedov, 49, a dentist by training but a bureaucrat by profession . . . **—New York Times, *February 15***

Inaugural Address of His Excellency
President Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov, D.D.S.

Delivered February 14, 2007
Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

To my Fellow Turkmen!

I speak to you orally for the first time as President and Prime Minister!

We have crossed the bridge into the 21st century, and brace ourselves for the future!

We have repelled the dreaded Tartar from the borders of our sacred Turkmenistan!

We have subjected the body politic to a thorough cleaning, scraped the accumulated impurities from our society, and spat them into the cup of history!

Not content with a surface brushing of decay from our political institutions, we have been emboldened to attack the roots of our nation's problems, to rinse the canals of government, to irrigate the cavities of neglect, and to deaden the very nerves of subversion that threaten the hygiene of our people!

The wisdom of our forefathers, hidden beneath the layers of time and neglect, has been extracted! We have put the retainers to work, taken a bite out of corruption, and, in our crowning achievement, straightened the crooked!

And, my fellow Turkmen, we are no longer the indentured servants of

the weekly Standard
February 26, 2007

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED